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Livingstone condemns choice of
ex-politician to head quango

Top Tory to wind up GLC affairs

By John Carvel,
Political Correspondent

The Government has pre-empted its own legislation by choosing a former Tory politician to run the quango which will administer an important part of London's local government after the abolition of the Greater London Council.

Mr Patrick Jenkin, the Environment Secretary, is planning to announce shortly after Whit Sunday that the chairman of the new "residual body" for London will be Sir Godfrey Taylor, aged 59, a former Conservative leader of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities.

Ministers will be embarrassed by the premature disclosure of his name at the start of the last week of the House of Lords' committee

the AMA's Labour leader, in supporting the first council-funded advertising campaign against previous legislation to force spending cuts by the use of local budget referendums.

Labour opponents regarded his appointment as chairman of the Southern Water Authority in 1981 as an attempt to shut him up. Since then colleagues have observed, however, that he has become an enthusiastic supporter of running the water industry with small teams of Government appointees supervising a professional staff.

Sir Godfrey is a businessman who has run a printing company in Cornwall. He has been an outstanding figure in London local government since the early 1950s, and was one of the main participants in the setting up of the GLC in 1964. He is regarded as likeable and approachable, and has shown that he can work with politicians of all parties.

The "residual body" which he will head is designed to wind up the GLC's affairs over the five years following abolition of the council which the Government has scheduled for March 31 next year.

The body will take control of a large part of the GLC's property, its debts, pension fund, computer facilities, and archives.

A Lords amendment has also given Sir Godfrey responsibility for the GLC's highways, management in the capital. Further amendments, due for debate this week, might add scientific services, which a Lords select committee has already recommended should be kept together on a London-wide basis if the GLC is abolished.

The GLC has estimated that the residual body would be responsible for an annual budget of £500 million. It will have a key role in organising the transfer of other functions to joint boards and the lower-tier borough councils. The task of organising this transfer in the face of open hostility from Labour councillors is widely regarded as one of the most difficult managerial problems in Britain.

The Government is planning similar arrangements for the six metropolitan counties. Turn to back page, col. 4

Owen ready for deal with Kinnock

By James Naughtie, Chief
Political Correspondent

Dr David Owen, the Social Democratic Party leader, yesterday tried to exploit Labour's "hunger" for a deal with the SDP-Liberal Alliance, and said that the new bout of enmity did not preclude negotiations with Mr Neil Kinnock on power sharing in a hung parliament.

Dr Owen said that though elements in the Conservative Party might appear more likely to consider an arrangement, he would attempt a deal with Mr Kinnock of Labour won more votes in the general election.

In doing so he was consciously trying to present himself as a figure far removed from the leader described by Mr Kinnock last week as having "an ego fat on arrogance and drunk on ambition."

Yesterday he claimed that Labour leaders would be under strong pressure to negotiate with the Alliance in a hung parliament.

He said on ITV's Weekend World: "I think that within the Labour Party there are people who are frothing at the mouth at one stage, but are much more realistic when it comes to the hard bargaining that they would face after an election."

Responding to accusations that he would prefer to deal with the Conservatives if the Alliance parties held the balance of power, he said: "My values would turn to the Labour Party." But he added that perhaps the readiness to make a realistic deal existed only among Conservatives.

Mr Kinnock's attack, closely followed by one from Mr Larry Whitty, the party's new general secretary, had been considered for some time before it was delivered.

According to Mr Kinnock's advisers he decided to focus on Dr Owen's personality after reading the SDP speech last week on the abolition of the state earnings-related pensions scheme. He considered it to be a sell-out — a charge Dr Owen denies.

Alliance leaders were delighted, believing that the strength of Mr Kinnock's attack enhanced their claims to be an electoral headache to Labour.

Dr Owen made full use of the tactical opening yesterday. He scoffed at Tory and Labour attempts to divide the Alliance, and said that he and Mr David Steele, the Liberal leader, would negotiate in a hung parliament together or not at all.

Questioned on their attitude if Labour-dominated a deadlocked parliament, he said there would have to be policy changes if a deal with Mr Kinnock was to be possible. He believed a "realistic common sense" view could emerge from Labour under the pressure of negotiations.

The scenario is dismissed by Mr Kinnock, who precludes any thought of an arrangement with Dr Owen.

Dr Owen argued in his interview that he was not ready to see the party split.

Hope of deal fails to stop Underground rail strike

By Keith Harper

A strike on the London Underground will begin today after talks between the National Union of Railwaysmen and the London Regional Transport failed to find an immediate agreement.

Mr Jimmy Knapp, the NUR's general secretary, said after the five-hour meeting in London that the strike was "very much on."

He had contacted other railway unions and would be seeing Mr Norman Willis, general secretary of the TUC today to seek further support.

In spite of the breakdown, the strike looks like being short-lived. Mr Tony Ridley, chairman and managing director of LRT, indicated that new proposals were being put to the NUR executive today, and he hoped that the system would be operating normally again tomorrow. Every effort would be made to run services normally today.

He also indicated that it was unlikely that the LRT would return to the courts to pursue its argument that the NUR had acted improperly.

Mr Knapp refused to divulge the contents of the deal he will be putting to the NUR executive today.



Mr Jimmy Knapp
meeting today

Today but Mr Ridley was looking forward to what he called a "speedy agreement."

He stressed that there would be no compulsory redundancies throughout the Underground system as a result of the extension of one-man operation.

The strike is in defiance of a High Court injunction requiring the NUR to drop its strike order to 16,000 LRT members until it has held a

ballot under the Trade Union Act of 1984.

LRT successfully applied for the ban in the High Court last Friday, so today's action could result in a severe financial penalty for the NUR if the management go back to the courts to say that the ban has been lifted.

The dispute is over the introduction of driver-only trains on the east London section of the Metropolitan Line from today. The union has been negotiating for 45-minute breaks after each two-hour period of driving. It insists that the added responsibility of the drivers under the new system increases stress.

Mr Knapp emphasised that a lot of yesterday's discussion had centred on the legal threat. He pointed out that the NUR was defending the jobs and conditions of its members and it was not willing to stand aside and see the LRT introduce new one-man trains without the agreement of the Union.

The possibility of the strike spreading to main-line services cannot be ruled out. The train drivers' union, the Aslef, has promised not to cross picket lines today.

Chinese fans in rampage

From Reuters

ANGRY Chinese soccer fans stormed foreigners' cars and smashed buses last night after their national side was eliminated from the Asian qualifying section of the World Cup.

Thousands of people ran riot after China went down 2-1 to Hong Kong at the Peking Workers' Stadium.

The Hong Kong team was besieged in the stadium for over an hour and in the street nearby a taxi was overturned and buses had their windows smashed.

The car of the Tass correspondent, Gazizulla Arslanov, was surrounded and bombarded with bricks and bottles, showering his young daughter with glass and debris.

A Reuters reporter, Mr Anthony Barker, was threatened with death if he disagreed that the Chinese team was best and the Times correspondent, Mr Mary Lee, was covered in spittle.

A 50lb car bomb was defused outside the football stadium in Victoria, northern Spain, yesterday after waiting fans were evacuated.

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Editor likely to lose expulsion appeal

By Martin Linton

The editor of the Morning Star, Mr Tony Chater, appeared last night to have lost his final appeal against expulsion at a special congress of the Communist Party at Hammersmith town hall, west London.

In an emotional speech he defended himself against charges that he had put himself at the head of the hard-line pro-Soviet faction of the party at a time when its leaders were taking a far more critical line.

He accused the leaders of capitulating to pressure from the "revisionists" grouped around the monthly journal, Marxism Today. He blamed the



Chris Myant —
"crunch of the hour"

there is little doubt that their appeals will be rejected by a majority of about two to one.

So far every vote at the congress has gone in the leadership's favour by majorities of about 160-80, with a margin of five or six votes either way.

The rigidity of the voting blocs is a sign of the discipline of the two factions, the leaders and the Euro-Communists on the one hand, and the Morning Star and the hard-liners on the other.

There may be some sympathy for a few among the 40 hard-liners who made their appeals yesterday against expulsion, suspension, or other disciplinary action on the ground that they may have been swept up in an act of rebellion against the party's line without being fully aware of it.

But there will be little mercy for Mr Chater and Mr Whitfield, who are held responsible by the leaders for the party's greatest crisis since the Soviet Union crushed the Hungarian uprising in 1956.

The debate at the congress, which was called specifically to discuss deep divisions in the party, soon turned into a slanging match between the supporters of the Morning Star

party's leader, Mr Gordon McLennan, for "going on his knees before this minority."

The Morning Star's deputy editor, Mr David Whitfield, made a similar appeal against his expulsion in which he accused the party's leaders of McCarthyism, and of using kangaroo courts.

Both will learn the result of voting at a closed session of the congress this morning, but

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NEWS IN BRIEF

PM 'hates unions'

MR JAMES Prior, the former Employment Secretary, said last night that Mrs Thatcher loathed trade unions. Back page.

Sentence protest

MORE than 1,000 protesters showed their support yesterday for two miners gaoled for killing a taxi driver. Page 3.

Car sales hope

A 50 PER CENT increase in Austin Rover sales is central to Labour's new strategy to regenerate the motor industry. Page 17.

NI talks 'failing'

IRISH ministers are contemplating the collapse of talks with Britain on Ulster's future. Page 2.

Israelis swap 1,150 PoWs for 3

From Iain Guest
in Geneva

A Palestinian commando group will exchange three Israeli soldiers today for 1,150 Palestinians and Lebanese held by Israel, Palestinians said yesterday.

The deal had been agreed indirectly between Israel and the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command through the mediation of the international Red Cross.

Three planes — two Libyan and one Bulgarian — were due to leave Damascus at 11.00 last night for Geneva, carrying the three Israeli soldiers and the exchange would start at 7.00 am today.

Three planes will arrive from Israel with 100 Arab detainees who will then be transferred to a plane belonging to Libyan Airlines and another two Bulgarian airliners.

The eventual destination of the Arabs has not yet been disclosed, although some are said to be heading for Libya, and others for the Lebanon.

The three Israelis were captured in the Lebanon in 1982 by the PFLP.

There is little information about the Arabs to be freed. Most were detained in the camp of Aitah in Israel and most are said to be members of the PFLP. Geneva is said to have been chosen in order to minimise controversy in Israel, and the possibility of demonstrations.

The group will also apparently include more than 100

£12bn in council house sales

By Michael Smith
Industrial Editor

MORE than £12 billion has been raised from the sale of council houses in the last six years — dwarfing the £5 billion which the Government has made by selling corporations like British Telecom.

Treasury figures show that £12.2 billion has been made from "sales of land and buildings" about double earlier unofficial estimates.

The revelation helps illuminate a largely obscure area of Government fundraising.

The up to date figures were disclosed by John Moore, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, in a written Commons answer to the Labour MP, Doctor Oonagh McDonald.

Report, page 17.

Jobs vetting

TEMPORARY secondments to the Civil Service are to be independently vetted in future. Page 2.

Free spirit

THE first holder of the Koestler chair of parapsychology says it is important to have an open mind. Page 2.

Drug abuse

INITIATIVES to counter heroin addiction are being criticised by MPs as inadequate. Page 3.

The weather

OUTBREAKS of rain. Details back page.

Little Emily has some great plans

Meet Emily. She's 8 years old. Can't read, can't write, can't count. Smiles a lot, though. Each day she dreams about a better future for her family. And for the whole village.

For just 50 pence a day (£9 a month), you can help needy children like Emily achieve their simple dreams through Foster Parents Plan.

Your donation is a life-time. It means education and literacy programmes; community health, nutrition and sanitation; irrigation and farming projects; and the vast experience that Foster Parents Plan has to offer. By regularly sponsoring a child, you'll help the family and community learn to help themselves. It's deeply moving watching your child and family grasp every opportunity your generosity provides.

And it's a fascinating way to appreciate your child's culture, family and way of life through regular letters and photographs.

Please, don't make little Emily wait even one more day. Because when hope dies, little Emily has nothing left to live for.

Help us, by becoming a Foster Parent, today.

Foster Parents Plan

☐ I enclose my first month's £9. Please tell me ☐ I enclose a donation about my Foster Child ☐ I am interested and would like you to send more details ☐ I would like to pay by Access/VISA (Credit and payment to become Foster Parents must be sent annual or annual)

Signature _____ My card no. is _____

Name (Printed) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

To: ELIZABETH LIDDELL, NATIONAL DIRECTOR
FOSTER PARENTS PLAN, 3RD FLOOR, 315 OXFORD STREET, LONDON W1A 1LA. TEL: 01-473 0940 (24 HRS). 01-409 1667

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INSIDE

Agenda	16
Arts reviews	11
Business & finance	17, 18
Classified advertising	3, 15, 19-21
Crosswords	27, 28
Guardian Women	2, 23
Home News	2, 12
Letters	4, 5
Overseas News	2, 9
Media	7, 9
Motoring	22
Sports News	22-25
TV & RADIO	26
ENTERTAINMENTS	27
PERSONAL	27

Nupe urged to wage guerrilla pay war

By John Ardill, Labour Correspondent

A long guerrilla war on public service pay was forecast yesterday by Mr Rodney Bickerstaffe, general secretary of the National Union of Public Employees, as he launched a plan to revise the union's pay strategy.

The union's conference in Scarborough approved a document calling for a long term plan, realism about what could be achieved, and a campaign to win public support. This reflected feedback from branches that members are not yet ready for all-out action on wages.

Mr Bickerstaffe said that a pay explosion in 1985 or 1986, which he forecast this year, could still happen if privatisation, the abolition of wages councils, cuts in services, and rate-capping came together with pay at the right time.

The pay debate brought a surge of feeling against demands for a shorter working week and longer holidays which form a major part of the public service unions' pay strategy.

A motion from Belfast, which would have ditched the hours demand in favour of pay issues for a major part of five years, was only narrowly defeated in a card vote, 4,982 in favour to 5,523 against.

Another motion giving priority to the hours claim was clearly carried on a show of hands, the margin of the vote suggesting that Belfast had won support for the main thrust of its resolution which stressed the needs of part-time women workers.

Mr Bickerstaffe said the executive's pay document, which calls for rank and file members to take part in the formulation of wages policy, was a pledge that members were worth their salt.

"We shall win through. It is a guerrilla war, but we can out-thrust Thatcher and her cohorts," he told delegates who pressed motions in favour of an all-out strike, that members wanted a different course of action. "We are not losing our battle, but we are going to lose our heads. If it is guerrilla war, we can outwit and we can win," he said.

The union, the fourth-largest affiliated to the Labour Party, will hold the Government-required ballot on continuation of its political fund in November.

A campaign for a "yes" vote, launched yesterday by the President, Mr Dilwyn Davies, will combine with a drive to build a membership workplace organisation, and improve the shop stewards' structure.

The union faces a long haul to retain its political voice. A sample poll some months ago indicated a 63 per cent to 32 per cent majority against the political levy.

Mr Davies said that, if Nupe lost its political voice, the loudest cheers would come from private contractors like Bregren and Tractor House Forte, and the 23 Tory MPs paid by contractors to speak for them in Parliament.

The conference rejected a call, backed by the executive, to widen the franchise for the selection of Labour parliamentary candidates after the next general election, and voted to oppose attempts to change the re-selection procedure. But it strongly backed an anti-Militant tendency motion supported by the executive.

This supported the expulsion of anyone contravening the party constitution by organising a separate party within its ranks, called on Labour to defeat Militant in debate, and unions to "explain the dangers" of such groups to their members. It added: "We completely dissociate ourselves from the laughable and disgraceful policies and the disorganised and divisive methods of Militant tendency, and we condemn the disastrous effects of Militant's role in the Labour Party Young Socialists."

Bombs find closes river

Part of the river Trent was closed by Nottinghamshire police at the weekend when amateur divers discovered bombs and machine gun ammunition from an RAF Lancaster bomber which crashed in 1943 at Hazeleford Ferry, near Blyth.

The divers threw the bombs and ammunition back into the river after seeing they were live, and a team of military bomb disposal experts and service divers were called to deal with the find.



CANTANKEROUS COMRADES: Mr Gordon McLennan, right, general secretary of the Communist Party, showing the door yesterday, to Mr Tony Chater, editor of the Morning Star. The expulsion of Mr Chater, who is accused of heading a hardline pro-Soviet faction in the party, is expected to be confirmed today at a special congress at Hammersmith town hall, west London. Pictures by Graham Turner



FitzGerald rates chances of success as at best evenly balanced

Dublin Cabinet contemplates the collapse of Anglo-Irish talks

From Joe Joyce, in Cork

The Irish Cabinet has reportedly begun to contemplate the collapse of its discussions with the British Government about Northern Ireland.

The consequences of failure were set out by the Prime Minister, Dr Garret FitzGerald, in his central address to the Fine Gael party's annual conference in Cork at the weekend. He rated the prospects of success as "at best" evenly balanced.

At least two cabinet ministers have begun to consider Dublin's response to the possible failure of the discussions. The talks are understood to face a critical point in the next month, and Dublin's optimism about the outcome has given way to pessimism.

One of the main sticking points is reform of Britain's security forces and their operation in Northern Ireland. This is central to Dublin's strategy for loosening the Sinn Féin and IRA grip on more than a third of Northern nationalists.

After more than 15 years of British pressure on Dublin over security, Irish ministers are finding Britain reluctant to give any ground on its own security system within Northern Ireland.



Dr Garret FitzGerald: nationalists frustrated

Dr FitzGerald pointed to Sinn Féin's local council electoral success last week as further proof of the danger of failing to end the alienation of Northern Catholics from the political and security systems under which they live.

He depicted Sinn Féin's support as evidence of the frustration felt by nationalists who were prepared to back an organisation which wanted to establish a military dictatorship throughout Ireland.

A shift of opinion away from Sinn Féin could only be expected if agreement was reached which allowed Northern nationalists to identify with their governing security, and legal and judicial systems, said Dr FitzGerald.

All nationalists in Northern Ireland were alienated to some degree from the system under which they lived, he said. The failure of the Anglo-Irish talks — intended by Dublin to counter this alienation — would present "a very serious situation," he declared.

It could lead to despair within Northern Ireland, a deep and damaging sense of frustration within the south, and "have serious effects for Britain's reputation in the world."

Dr FitzGerald remained publicly optimistic about the outcome, although all his comments were couched in more cautious language than he has used in recent months. But he said there was a real chance that a solution could be found that would be "just acceptable" to both sides.

He promised to pursue the talks with total commitment until he succeeded, or established beyond doubt that success was beyond his grasp.

Despite the importance of the Ulster issue for Dr FitzGerald's political standing, the conference did not include a debate on Northern policy because of the delicacy of the Anglo-Irish talks.

New conference arrangements dispensed with an advance agenda and motions were accepted on the spot. Ministers had to present themselves for question and answer sessions at three separate halls where debates were conducted simultaneously.

Party organisers described the arrangements as unprecedentedly democratic but cynics noted that the format prevented the development of any critical handwagons at a time when the Government is badly behind in the opinion polls.

Delegates only came together when 5,000 people were bused to a huge basketball stadium for Dr FitzGerald's address.

The conference revealed the strength of the liberal wing which Dr FitzGerald has grafted onto a party traditionally known for its rightwing responses to social issues.

The Prime Minister and his Justice Minister, Mr Michael Noonan, faced criticism for their police and prison based response to the republic's crime problems. Support for the immediate introduction of divorce was clearly stronger among delegates than their ministers.

Koestler chair goes to American

By Gareth Parry

THE Koestler chair of parapsychology at Edinburgh University has gone to Dr Robert Morris, the senior research scientist at the School of Computer and Information Science at Syracuse, New York. He is expected to take up the post by January 1.

Dr Morris's reputation as a cautious and rigorous researcher into, and interpreter of, parapsychological phenomena in a wide range of contexts, is seen to suit eminently his appointment to such a controversial chair.

The principal of Edinburgh University, Dr John Burnett, said the decision to accept the offer of the Koestler trustees to establish the chair at Edinburgh had not been taken lightly, "particularly in view of the controversial nature of parapsychological phenomena."

There had been overwhelming support for the opportunity to further scientific research, as the Koestler trustees put it into "the capacity attributed to some individuals to interact with the external environment by means other than recognised sensory or motor channels."

The £500,000 endowment for the Koestler Chair of Parapsychology comes from the trustees of the writer and critic, the late Arthur Koestler, who committed suicide in London in 1962, in a "love pact."

Edinburgh University drew up a list of more than 30 academics with appropriate qualifications in the field of psychic research.

Dr Morris, who is 42, was not one of the names popularly considered for the post, but his qualifications made him clear leader of the short-list of eight which the university drew up.

He took his first degree, bachelor of science and psychology, at Pittsburgh University, and a PhD in the psychology of human social behaviour from the University of North Carolina. He has also held academic posts at California University, Santa Barbara, and at Irvine, California.

Dr Morris is president of the Parapsychological Association and vice-president of the Society for Scientific Exploration. His publications include studies in animal behaviour, and both detailed scientific assessments and popular critical accounts of parapsychological phenomena.

Dr Morris said: "I and my family look forward to the move to Edinburgh, and I very much welcome the opportunity to further my researches from within an institution whose academic and scientific standards are internationally known."

"I believe it is important to keep an open mind on the issue of apparent psychic phenomena. Some of them may have had perfectly ordinary explanations, others may need detailed and long-term scientific exploration and scrutiny."

The chair is the first such established professorial post in Britain and will be held within the faculty of social sciences in the Department of Psychology.

Union supports deal on Post Office changes

By Patrick Wintour, Labour Staff

Post Office plans to introduce sweeping changes in working practices received a boost yesterday when the Union of Communication Workers rejected an attempt to block the proposals.

The 10-1 margin delighted senior Post Office management who were observing the union's annual conference yesterday. But delegates may throw out aspects of the package, including more part-time workers and a compulsory productivity scheme. Later this week

A national postal strike was narrowly averted at Easter after the management started to introduce new sorting machinery without union agreement at Mount Pleasant sorting office, London.

A deal was reached for which the UCU executive is seeking endorsement this week.



Alan Tiffin: 'alternative is confrontation.'

Mr Alan Tiffin, the union's general secretary, told the Bournemouth conference yesterday: "The agreements covering new technology, productivity, and mechanisation are good agreements. They provide safeguards for members in terms of conditions and employment and job security as well as sharing the benefits."

"To those that criticise the agreements, I challenge them to come to the rostrum and tell us of another industry or union that has negotiated such agreements in today's economic and industrial climate. The alternative is confrontation."

The union had to abandon some long-held policies on working practices.

"If you stand still you will get knocked over and the injuries may well be fatal," Mr Tiffin said that rejection of the package would have to be put to an individual secret ballot, which was taken by Post Office management as a warning to UCU activists.

Mr Billy Hayes, representing a Liverpool amalgamated branch, who is chairman of the union's unofficial broad left, moved rejection of the proposals. He doubted the sanctity of the management's offer of no compulsory redundancies and poured scorn on the pay increases under the agreement.

The deal offered no reduction in the working week and job losses would be far higher than the management had indicated. The union had to challenge the Post Office some time.

"If we say we must wait until there is a Labour Government it's likely that we will say we cannot take the Post Office on because there is a Labour Government. When will the time be right?"

Moderator sees spectre of Nazism in Britain

By Jean Stead, Scottish Correspondent

Basic freedoms in Britain are in as much danger as they were in Germany under the Nazis, the new Moderator of Church of Scotland's general assembly said yesterday.

Dr David Smith was delivering a sermon in St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, where the annual assembly opened.

Calling for a new sense of Christian commitment, he said that the church's situation was similar to that in Germany in the 1930s.

"Indiscreetly and carefully, with political pressure in the right places, and carefully calibrating personal support from the right people, a great campaign is in progress to undermine the Christian culture and destroy the Christian heritage in Britain."

Dr Smith called a press conference in Edinburgh last night to clarify his remarks. He said in his sermon that the freedom "to seek your own thoughts and express them, to choose your form of government, to move freely within your own country and travel beyond its bounds at will — all that is at stake."

The whole structure of our civilisation, in which the young feel loving responsibility for the aged and the healthy will provide for those who are crippled — all that is at stake."

Dr Smith said later that his sermon was not an attack on the Government or any party, but against the adverse forces

of the extreme right and left, which have been allowed to gain control, and which would destroy our freedoms.

His main concerns include the spread of Islam and other foreign religions in Britain. "Is it not very remarkable, is it not a significant warning sign that in Christian Britain a Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu will be treated with more tolerance than an active Christian?" He said that it was the professed aim of Islam to visit in the corridors of power and to establish a mosque in every major centre of population.

"Events in Iran have indicated the militant spirit of Islam on its home territory."

Russia was already reacting in the corridors of power and to establish a mosque in every major centre of population.

"We can think of the evidence that it is on the march. He said he had spoken from time to time with government ministers of both parties.

"All of them indicate in the clearest terms that the opponents of Christianity are well organised, have a strong lobby in the corridors of power and exert pressure in high places."

"The freedom to choose your way of life and work, how you will earn and spend your money, how you will educate your children and what values you would offer them — all that is at stake."

Dr Smith, who was a parish priest in Stirlingshire, has as chairman of the church education committee been concerned with tendencies to drop the Christian teaching from schools.

Brecon decision for Labour

By a Staff Reporter

Labour's candidate to fight the Brecon and Radnor by-election, caused by the death of the Conservative MP Mr Tom Hoosen, is due to be selected tomorrow. A short list of four or five will be drawn up today from nearly 20 hopefuls.

Labour had 25 per cent of the vote at the 1983 general election, the Alliance 24.4 per cent and Mr Hoosen 48.2 per cent.

The result then was: T. Hoosen (Con) 18,255; the Rev. Dr D. Morris (Lab) 9,471; R. Lacey, (Lib) 9,226; S. Meredith (Plaid Cymru) 640; R. Booth (Ind) 278.

The Euro MP for Shrewsbury, Mr Bob Cryer, was selected yesterday as prospective Labour candidate for the marginal Westminster seat of Bradford South, in succession to Mr Tom Torney, who is retiring.

Mr Cryer, a prominent left-winger in the Commons when he represented Keighley from 1974 until his defeat in 1983, won the nomination on a third ballot from a short list of five. Labour holds the seat with a majority of 110 over the Conservatives.

Polaris missile ditches after in-flight fault

By David Fairhall, Defence Correspondent

A test of Britain's Polaris nuclear deterrent failed yesterday when a fault developed after the second stage rocket motor had ignited. The unarmed ballistic missile fell into the Atlantic short of its target having been fired from the submerged submarine HMS Resolution off the Florida coast.

It had emerged correctly from the sea and its first stage rocket motor functioned properly. What went wrong will not be known until recordings of the test flight instrumentation have been analysed.

Several years ago it was discovered that the Polaris rocket motors were becoming unreliable with age and these are now being replaced from the United States at a cost of more than £300 million.

Yesterday's test was the first of the normal firings every Polaris submarine conducts on the US Atlantic range after finishing a long overhaul.

Resolution came out of the Rosyth naval dockyard on the Forth of Firth last autumn after completing her third

2100 million major refit. Many of the systems were virtually rebuilt and, in some cases, updated.

She was the first of the navy's 4-boat deterrent force to undergo a third refit and may have a fourth in the early 1990s. The first Trident submarine is not now expected to be in service until 1994.

Resolution had arrived in Port Canswell on May 2 and would normally have test fired several missiles without their multiple Chevaline warheads to allow both the alternating crews to practise the launch procedure.

On this occasion Commander Mike Sime was in charge, though he will have known little about what was happening above the surface once he felt the thump of the Polaris leaving its vertical launch tube.

Whatever the cause, yesterday's failure is an important reminder that complex nuclear weapon systems can never be guaranteed 100 per cent to work properly whether in surprise attack or, in the case of President Reagan's so-called "star wars," in strategic defence.

Labour moves early to ban cane

By Andrew Moneer, Education Staff

Local Labour politicians are being urged to abolish corporal punishment — now reckoned to be meted out 250,000 times a year in schools in England and Wales — before the law leaving the option on beatings to parents, comes into force.

Mr Andrew Bennett, Labour's deputy education spokesman in the Commons, has written to all Labour groups on local education authorities asking them to review their policy.

Where they control the authority, Mr Bennett, a former teacher, is pressing them to

act before the Education (Corporal Punishment) Bill is enacted. It is due to come into effect in September, 1986.

The legislation gives parents the right to insist that their children are not liable to be beaten.

It has been widely criticised by teachers who believe that new rules will be unworkable, because pupils who have been exempted and those who have not, will face different punishments for the same offence.

Mr Bennett said yesterday that the bill was a bureaucratic nightmare which failed to make clear whether in future the power to abolish

OBITUARY

Writer of Broadway musicals

ABE BURBOWS, who wrote the book for the musical Guys and Dolls and several other big Broadway successes, has died at his home at age 74.

A prolific librettist, director, author and comic, he had been ill for many years, among other works he wrote and directed were How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, Can Can, What Makes Sammy Run, and an American version of the French show Cactus Flower.

He collaborated with the composer-lyricist Frank Loesser for Guys and Dolls, a tale of Damon Runyon-style characters which ran for 1,200 performances, netted millions of dollars and enjoyed a series of revivals.

Testing time

Twenty young people were given medical treatment during the 26th annual Ten Tors expedition across Dartmoor yesterday. Most were suffering from tiredness, blisters, strains and sprains. More than 2,000 took part in the two-day test of navigation, endurance and planning.

Reveller knifed

A 25-year-old man was repeatedly stabbed by an intruder at his home early yesterday, after returning from a Roman-style fancy dress party. The attack happened at the RAF base at Wytton, near Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire.

Shops reform opposition

By James Naughtie, Chief Political Correspondent

Several Conservative MPs are planning to defy a three-line whip in the Commons tonight as a protest against liberalisation of Sunday trading.

MPs are voting on a motion to accept the Audit Report, which recommends the reform. This gives ministers an opportunity to gauge the strength of opposition on the backbenches before drawing up a bill for the next parliamentary session.

Several Tory MPs protested at last week's meeting of the backbench 1924 committee at the imposition of a three-line whip to vote — but government

business managers have concluded that the tactic is the best way of establishing the size of the potential opposition. There seems little doubt that the Government will proceed with legislation. The Prime Minister is strongly in favour and even former opponents such as Mr John Gummer, the party chairman, and a lay member of the Church of England synod, have come out in support, despite the worries expressed by some church leaders.

There is also opposition from Labour MPs who argue that liberalising Sunday trading would force shop workers to work longer hours and would raise prices.

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New rules drafted for Civil Service postings

By Richard Norton-Taylor

The Government is drafting new rules to cover individuals taking up temporary posts in the Civil Service.

Until they are completed any Government proposal to second people to Whitehall will be referred to the Civil Service Commission, the body responsible for upholding standards of probity, character, and free and open competition.

Mrs Thatcher's assurance, given in a written Commons answer last week, follows the controversy surrounding the appointment of Mr Peter Levene, a former personal adviser to Mr Michael Heseltine, and former defence contractor, to head the Ministry of Defence arms procurement agency.

The Prime Minister announced in March that the original plan to second Mr Levene to the ministry broke existing Civil Service rules. He was eventually appointed under a five-year fixed contract after the Government found an escape clause in the 1982 Civil Service Order in Council.

But the Government discovered that in addition to the terms of Mr Levene's original appointment, other secondments covering several hundred posts since 1978 were also illegal.

Mrs Thatcher said these had now all been "regularised" by a new Order made at a meeting of the Privy Council last Wednesday.

The debate — about the status of senior civil servants — will receive a further impetus today with an announcement from the Royal Institute of Public Administration that it has set up an inquiry into whether greater political control over Civil Service appointments should be encouraged.

Professor David Williams, president of Wolfson College, Cambridge, will chair a group looking at the implications of "politicising" appointments for the traditional career Civil Service.

It will consider whether Britain should adopt the practice in the US, France, and Germany where senior Civil Service appointments are openly political.

The working group includes Lord Barnett, a former Labour Treasury minister, Sir Kenneth Cleeve, a former permanent secretary at the Department of Trade, and Lord Donoughue, policy adviser at 10 Downing Street during the Wilson and Callaghan administrations.

Dr William Plowden, the Institute's director-general, said recently that Mrs Thatcher's attitude towards the Civil Service was a portent of a long-term trend towards greater political control, a trend that was both necessary and desirable.

He added: "The claim that a neutral civil service is the best guarantee of an Englishman's liberty seems to me a wholly undesirable argument for the status quo."

Marchers scorn 'political' verdict on killers

By Paul Hoyland, Welsh Correspondent

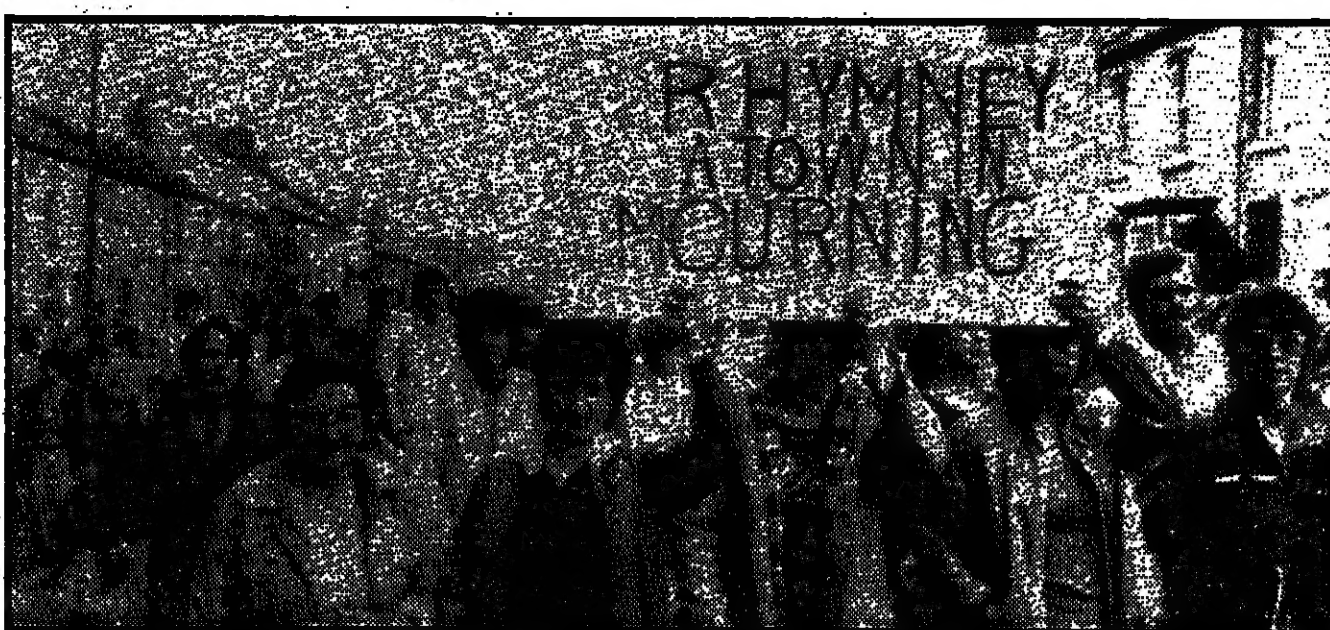
More than a thousand people marched through the village of Rhymney, mid-Glamorgan, yesterday in support of the two miners gaoled for life for murdering a taxi driver during the coal strike last year.

They carried placards denouncing last week's murder verdicts against Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland, both aged 21, whose families live in the village.

The march passed near the home of Mr David Williams, the miner who was being taken to work in the taxi through picket lines each day when the driver, Mr David Wilkie, was killed by a concrete block, which was pushed from a bridge and smashed through his windscreen.

Police and stewards stopped the demonstrators from walking past Mr Williams's house but miners on the march gave vent to their feelings with loud cries of "scab".

At a rally on the village's Eisteddfod field, Mr Ray Davies, a mid-Glamorgan Labour county councillor, said: "When that despicable verdict was announced there were shock waves of horror and revulsion that went through the valley. Thatcher and her cronies had shouted murder before they knew anything



VILLAGE VOICE: Demonstrators on the streets of the mining community of Rhymney, mid-Glamorgan, yesterday in support of the two pitmen gaoled for life last week for murdering a taxi driver during the coal strike

about the case. There was no way they were going to get a fair trial. We feel for the death of a person as much as anyone else would. But what we are saying is that the two lads in our community are not murderers and should not be branded as murderers. I hope the preparation for an appeal will go ahead with all speed."

Mr Ted Rowlands, Labour MP for Merthyr and Rhymney,

European MP for South-East Wales, claimed it was a political sentence. "It was a warning that anyone who decides to take on this government will not be tolerated. It is ironic that not one policeman has been on trial yet for the thousands of acts of brutality during the strike."

Dr Kim Howells, the National Union

MPs condemn 'cash starved' campaign to treat heroin users

By David Hencke, Social Services Correspondent

Government initiatives to give priority to fighting heroin addiction in Britain will be condemned by the all-party Commons social services committee in a report next month.

Conservative and Labour members have been unanimous in the criticism of Mr John Patten, the junior health minister, that the Department of Health and Social Security has taken a lead in helping treat drug addicts.

The Government has asked the 192 health authorities to make drug treatment a priority

ity, but MPs believe they cannot be expected to cope without cash from Whitehall.

The scheme to start new projects for treating drug addicts costs only £10 million over three years and health authorities have to share the cash with the voluntary sector.

Health authorities have to give heroin addiction equal priority with treatment for the mentally ill, the handicapped, elderly and children.

Many MPs who have visited National Health Service and voluntary group centres are upset about the small amount

of progress being made in many authorities.

The MPs' inquiries parallel investigations by the Guardian this year which disclosed a patchy response to a DHSS circular asking authorities to list action taken and to outline plans for tackling the problem.

Some authorities, notably Barnsley, Yorkshire, and a number of small towns in the North-west, appeared oblivious of the problem or the need to act.

So far £7.7 million has been approved to start 98 projects but Mr Patten is being criticised by the voluntary movement for setting up organisations that face closure because they cannot find funds to continue their work.

Lord Rodney, chairman of the Standing Conference on Drug Abuse who invited Mr Patten to open premises which the DHSS had funded, even criticised him in a vote of thanks at the ceremony last week.

He told Mr Patten: "Many organisations are already in dire financial straits because they find it difficult for health or local authorities to finance them after the money runs out."

Some of the staff are devoting so much time to fundraising as they are to doing the job they were set up to do — treating drug addicts."

The Government's £23 million advertising campaign to combat heroin abuse is to be launched tomorrow by Mr Patten. The first television advertisements are due to be broadcast on Wednesday and are aimed to inform rather than shock.

London drug addicts 'may number 20,000'

By Gareth Parry

Recent research suggests that there may be as many as 20,000 regular users of heroin and other opium-based drugs in London, according to a Standing Conference on Drug Abuse (Scoda).

Consumption of other drugs, such as legal stimulants and illegal amphetamine, is also high, Scoda says in a statement today.

The number of registered addicts known to the Home Office fell between 1977 and 1983, and increasing quantities of drugs have been seized since 1980.

"The situation is clearly worsening. Illicit drug prices, such as those of heroin and amphetamine, have fallen sub-

stantially when set against inflation."

Scoda says that there are 14 National Health Service drug dependence units in London and four inpatient units. A further 22 non-statutory specialist agencies offer advice, support, self-help and rehabilitation. Most are small and under great pressure.

But the overall level of resources is under threat as the problem continues to grow, says Scoda. Many services funded by the Greater London Council and borough councils are in doubt because of the proposed abolition of the GLC.

Some non-statutory agencies funded by local government, fear that they may be unable to continue.

Police on alert for trouble at Stonehenge

By Martin Wainwright

POLICE in Wiltshire announced yesterday that all leave would be cancelled as part of preparations to prevent the free festival which has been held near Stonehenge for the past 11 years.

Neighbouring forces have agreed to provide help should it be needed, and police have advised local farmers to secure gates and outbuildings as the traditional date for the start of the festival, June 1, approaches.

Previous festivals have attracted up to 30,000 people to National Trust land near the stone circle with damage caused to archaeological sites in the area.

The trust and English Heritage say that the event is irreconcilable with the safety of Stonehenge and that the festival spoils the opportunity for quieter, more organised celebrations of the summer solstice.

Groups associated with the festival, which have distributed 150,000 stickers urging people to come, still hope that a compromise will prove possible.

One member of the Polytechnic Circle, an anonymous society convinced of the spiritual power of Stonehenge, said that an alternative site would be acceptable. "The henge needs a rest," he said. "We would be willing to camp somewhere further away, so long as we were within sight of the stones."

The National Trust, Wiltshire County Council and private landowners in the area, who have united to get court injunctions against trespass, are unwilling to provide any land.

The area has been ringed temporarily with razor-wire mesh, and the traditional Druid ceremony at the stones when dawn breaks on the solstice (June 21) has been cancelled because of fears of trouble with thwarted festival-goers.

The festival, at which drugs circulate freely, has attracted a mixture of groups



THREE MEN IN A SUIT: Triptych Man, a mobile, living sculpture, about to leave Waterloo Station, London, yesterday, for Southampton, where it will take part in the British Art Show. It consists of its creator, Stephen Taylor Woodrow, with Mark Gaylor, and Daniel Kay, all in a three-man suit, in which they can move about at speed.

Maxwell peace gesture

By Maggie Brown

Mr Robert Maxwell said last night that he was not expecting to introduce single stroke direct inputting — where journalists and others take over traditional printers' work — at the Mirror Group Newspapers at part of his plans to move production out of Fleet Street.

His new colour printing works, to be operated by British Printing and Communica-

tions Corporation in either Stamford Street, Southwark south London or the preferred site in the London dockland, would require £80 to £100 million investment.

The final switch would take place by July 1987, and be partly funded by profits from the Holborn site, which could be worth £120 million.

Mersey's police dilemma comes to a head

By James Lewis

The chief constable of Merseyside, Mr Ken Oxford, is likely to tell his police committee this week that he does not intend to retire or resign. "I have every Christian virtue except resignation," he once said.

He was invited to depart after failing to attend an important budget meeting. It transpired that he had gone to Washington to attend an anti-terrorist conference at the behest of the Home Secretary.

"We would have given him permission had he asked," says the chairman of the police committee, Mrs Margaret Simey. "But he didn't."

Though Mrs Simey is regarded as the scourge of Britain's all-powerful chief constables, she speaks of Mr Oxford with respect and admits that they got on well at a personal level. "The issue is accountability," she says.

Accountability acquired a new importance after the 1981 Toxteth riots. Important changes were made in policing Liverpool and more officers were put on the beat. "We cut their car allowances to make them walk," says Mrs Simey. Lay visiting of police stations has been established and there are regular public forums between police and the community.

Mrs Simey believes that the changes and the continuing threat in Toxteth is put at risk by control from Westminster. Lack of respect and the impending abolition of the rate-capped Merseyside County Council, which has made a rate but not produced a budget.

Long-running rows about administrative accountability were aggravated by the miners' dispute, when Mr Oxford spent an extra £5 million on overtime over which the police committee had no control.

His trip to Washington — for which he later apologised — was the last straw.

Mrs Simey says that local democracy is meaningless if Mr Oxford is entitled to demand, in effect, a blank cheque. The size of this year's cheque is particularly in dispute, though the Home Office said Merseyside was entitled to £105 million. The Department of the Environment, the department overseeing local government, calculates that it will get only £92 million. The police, says Mrs Simey, are demanding the larger sum from her committee.

Mrs Simey admits to annoying some of her Labour colleagues when she speaks nostalgically of "Dear Willie" Whitehead who as Home Secretary maintained the concept of responsibility by talking regularly to chief constables and police chairmen of the big metropolitan forces.

This year, however, the Department of the Environment was calling the tune and demanding spending cuts. "As we were not prepared to opt for personal bankruptcy or prison for the sake of a police force which has always made it clear that it does not welcome the presence of politicians in its decision-making process, we had to comply," says Mrs Simey.

"The string attached, however, was that we said nothing about what we would actually do with the cash raised by the precept."

If Mr Oxford, aged 60, declines to go gracefully the Merseyside committee, which does not have the power to dismiss him, could ask the Home Secretary to require him to retire. However, the doomed committee has probably left it too late to exercise its limited powers to appoint a successor.

SDP gives more power to grassroots

By Martin Wainwright

The Social Democrats have voted to widen grassroots access to party policy-making, but rejected a move to give activists the final say.

The party's Council for Social Democracy agreed at the weekend to accept motions from the 220 area parties, rather than only from the much larger regional groups.

But the council narrowly declined to give itself the final say on policy. This is agreed in a sort of Lords and Commons duet, between the council and the SDP's policy committee.

Delegates at Kensington town hall in London voted by 113 to 102 against a motion, drawn by the party's radical Limehouse group, to give the council the last word.

Mr Dick Newby, the SDP's national secretary, described the decision as a self-denying choice which would maintain the relationship between the policy committee and the council.

The council has occasionally proved more ebullient than the

party's leaders would like, as motion which called for immediate ban on the use of plastic bullets last year.

The leadership is well-represented on the policy committee and tends to win support in ballots of the whole SDP membership.

These are required for council motions which fail to win a two-thirds majority among them the vote to allow area parties to submit motions, which will be voted on by the membership later this year.

Meanwhile, the Liberal Party

council narrowly defeated a motion which would have encouraged local parties to appoint prospective parliamentary candidates without first reaching agreement with the SDP about who was to fight which seat.

The motion's backers were concerned that delays in choosing candidates would dispel the momentum of the county council elections and recent opinion polls.

Opponents argue that more damage would be done by any disputes with the SDP which arose as a result.

CREATIVE, MEDIA, AND MARKETING

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TEMPORARY COMMITTEE SECRETARY/COURSE ORGANISER

PTBC (Planning and Transport) Committee at Cornwall County Council requires a temporary administrative assistant to assist the committee secretary in the preparation of reports and minutes. The post is for approximately 3 months to organise mid-career training course and seminars in urban planning, transport planning and highway design. Experienced, enthusiastic, self-reliant, young graduate preferred. Previous council organising experience desirable. Hard work but satisfying. Salary negotiable. Send cv immediately to: Ms A. M. Quinn, Managing Director, PTBC Committee and Research Services Limited, 118 Strand, London, WC2R 2JL. Tel. 01-583 7194.

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Arts Council OF GREAT BRITAIN Bursaries for Electro-Acoustic Music 1985/86

The scheme is intended to help with the preparation of specific projects, or longer-term development of ideas within the electro-acoustic music area. Applications should be from musicians and composers working in England in the electro-acoustic music field.

The scheme is not open to full-time students, nor is it intended to support full-time educational activities. Application forms are available from: John Muir, Music Officer, Arts Council of Great Britain, 105 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AU. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR COMPLETED APPLICATIONS IS 22 JUNE 1985.

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EXHIBITION CO-ORDINATOR

A temporary Exhibition Co-ordinator, is urgently required to help organise the 1985 Art Exhibition held by Kent County Council, Education Department, at Maidstone Library Art Gallery.

The post will run from 17th June to 18th October 1985 and will carry a fee of £1,000 plus approved expenses.

The Exhibition Co-ordinator will work on a part-time basis, and the nature of the post will require a flexible approach in terms of time keeping. It is expected that the successful candidate will work an average of 15 hours per week.

As there will be an active involvement in the selection of work in the design of the exhibition, applicants should have suitable experience in all practical aspects of exhibition organisation. This appointment receives financial support from the South East Arts Association.

Application forms returnable by 3rd June, from the County Librarian, Library Headquarters, Springfield, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2JJ. Phone Maidstone (0622) 671411, ext. 3246.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Creative and Media continues on page 8

On the right lines.

Passengers at King's Cross can now use three PETs—or Passenger Enquiry Terminals—to give them train times and fares at the touch of a button.

A page of computerised information is selected from an index. In future this page will be printed out for later reference.

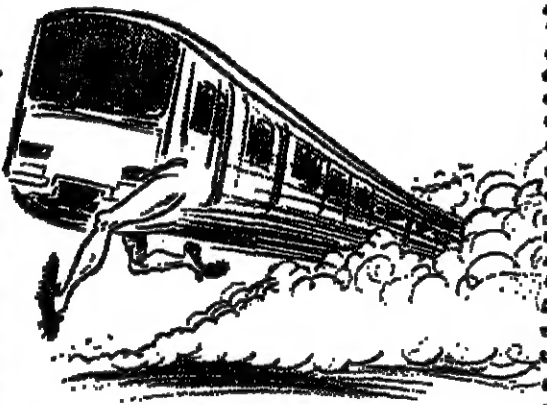
At the moment, these self-help machines, linked to Prestel, are on an experimental basis, but, if successful, they will be extended to other stations.



'Sprinter' trains get the word go.

A fleet of new, faster, quieter diesel trains is being introduced on many cross-country and local urban lines over the next 18 months.

They can cut up to 10% off the journey times of the old diesel units. They have a top speed of 75 mph, faster acceleration, and all the interior surfaces of the 'Sprinter' trains are designed to be wiped clean, with removable seat covers and no dust traps.



Each 'Sprinter' train has a suspension system involving a cushion of air for a smoother ride.

'Sprinters' will not only give a cleaner and faster journey, they will make lightly used lines more economic to run.

Roast beef specials.

Sunday special trains with the accent on good food and nostalgia are proving a great success.

The round-trip fare includes a three-course roast beef Sunday lunch served on the journey. The trains are so popular that most seats are sold long before the day.

Some trains have been pulled by restored steam locomotives.

So far the specials from London have visited Norwich, York and Stratford on Avon—with the afternoon free for sight-seeing.



We're getting there.

State Department condemns

'violence' against Honduras

US supports claims of Nicaraguan 'invasion'

From Michael White in Washington

The State Department is encouraging claims by Honduras that Nicaragua's leftwing Sandinista regime has begun to send up to 200 troops at a time across the common border in hot pursuit of contra rebels, a scenario which critics of American policy fear may lead to an escalation of US involvement.

In the past few days the Honduran Government has pressed to the Sandinistas about "shelling and incursions" but Nicaraguan troops, and the State Department has backed it with condemnation of Nicaragua's "violent acts." A report in yesterday's New York Times quotes American military and diplomatic sources in Honduras—which is getting \$64 million in military aid from the US this year—as saying that Honduras was proving ineffectual against the Nicaraguan troops and had been too "embarrassed" to make a fuss about the incursions.

The Sandinistas are currently making a strong push against the contras, operating in the north of the country from headquarters in Las Vegas in south-west Honduras, and the Times reports 1,000 Honduran civilians fleeing the war and demanding protection from the military. No US troops are reported to be close to the fighting but a serious border incident amounting to claims of an "invasion" of Honduras could activate the Rio Treaty which commits the US to protect its southern neighbours.

While admitting the probability of accidental incursions the Nicaraguans have persistently denied hostile intent towards Honduras. Some experienced American officers who have inspected the terrain and the forces describe the prospect as laughable. The administration has a strong motive in sustaining public anxiety about "another Cuba" on the mainland while the issue of aid to the contras remains deadlocked in Congress.

President Duarte's easy progress has been marred by complaints that insufficient progress has been made in solving the murder of two American labour organisers and a Salvadoran colleague in 1981. Responsibility for which was pinned on low-ranking soldiers.

Tony Jenkins adds from Tegucigalpa: President Roberto Suazo of Honduras left here yesterday for a visit to Washington. There are fears that his absence could provoke a national strike and the intervention of the armed forces.

On Friday night the two largest unions in the country, the CGT and the CTH, declared a general strike over a series of political demands. The declaration did not say when the strike would start, but Western diplomats believe that it could come into effect at the start of this week, while the President is in Washington.



The Mayor of Philadelphia, Mr Wilson Goode (left) and Samuel Pierce (second from left) the US Housing Secretary, visit the devastated suburban buildings which were burnt out last week when police used a bomb to end a siege. Eleven people died and 53 homes were destroyed.

Democrats deprive Hispanics, blacks and women of their special caucus status

From Michael White in Washington

In its efforts to rid itself of the stigma of being portrayed as the creature of "the special interest groups," the Democratic Party has abolished the special status of seven caucus groups within the party's national committee.

The seven, which sprang up after a decision in 1982 to give official status and administrative support to any group which could command 10 per cent of the 377 votes on the Democratic National Committee, included not only blacks, women, and Hispanics—for whom the change had been intended—but Asian-Pacific, lesbian and gay, liberal-progres-

sive, and even a business and professional caucus. At a weekend session of the DNC, the rights of the black, women's and Hispanic caucuses to have at least one seat each on the party executive were reiterated and steps taken to make it easier for any caucus group to hold informal meetings at party events.

It did not stop some of the activists involved expressing the fear that the new DNC chairman, Mr Paul Kirk, was intent upon eventually eliminating these privileges, too. In a complaint which echoes a similar debate within the British Labour Party, a black congressman, Mr Mickey Leonard, of Texas, complained that caucuses had been "a mess"

for blacks and Hispanics to participate and generate interest in the party. Be that as it may, the Republicans have wrapped the "special interest" label around Democratic necks, especially after the AFL-CIO, representing most unions, took the unprecedented step of endorsing Mr Walter Mondale's candidacy for the presidency even before the 1984 primary elections. Mr Kirk is also trying to discourage that step, although Labour leaders are resisting it on the ground that it enables them to concentrate a united effort behind a consensus candidate.

As the Democrats struggle to sort out programmes, personalities, and organisational problems for the promising mid-term elections of 1986, respect was given to the notion of a simultaneous regional primary—several states voting on the same day—in the South, at least, to minimise a prolonged and bruising primary struggle in 1988.

A measure of the problem is that most of the council's 77 members are white, elected males, and the touring party, which included Senator Sam Nunn, the Georgia defence specialist and Republican Richard Goodhart, of Missouri, a likely contender for the 1988 nomination, were promptly challenged on the whereabouts of blacks, women and Hispanics on the platform. They promised to do better next time.

National Front gets a cold douche from the parish pump

From Campbell Page in Mons-en-Baroeul

FOR A DAMP Sunday morning in a small town on the outskirts of Lille, turnout was good at a local election. Four hours after the opening of the polls, 53 per cent of the electorate had voted.

The voters of Mons-en-Baroeul and the 36-year-old Socialist mayor, Mr Marc Wolf, were making a little bit of history. Immigrants have never voted in an election and this was the first time that they had been invited to do so.

Mr Wolf, accused by the conventional right of turning his citizens into guinea pigs and denounced by the extreme right National Front for acting illegally, said yesterday: "This election is not an experiment but a response to the needs of this particular community." Giving immigrants the vote was part of his last electoral platform.

When, on April 20, President Francois Mitterrand told the League of Human Rights that immigrants had a basic claim to participate in local government, politicians and commentators were surprised. Although Mitterrand had included local voting rights for immigrants in his 110 proposals during the 1981 presidential campaign, the Socialists had since ignored the issue.

Critics accused the president of making a worthless promise. Supporters said he was gradually educating a largely hostile public opinion towards the day when those among France's 3.7 million immigrants who were eligible by age and periods of residence would be given the right to vote in local elections.

Some observers believe that Mr Wolf is a zealot who is moving too fast for the Socialist party leadership.

Local experiment gives immigrants toe-hold in politics

while others think that party leaders welcome his initiative as a test of public opinion. Asked yesterday why no leading Socialist party members had turned up to see the historic event, Mr Wolf said: "Power has been decentralised now in France."

The Mons scheme is ingenious. The 2,000 immigrants in the population of 28,000 were told that any foreigner over 18 who had lived in the town since January 1 could register, and two-thirds of them did so. The immigrants were electing their own representatives.

Since the immigrants are mainly Algerian (29 per cent), Moroccan (also 29 per cent), and south-east Asian (15 per cent), the immigrant voters were asked to choose three representatives from three lists restricted to Algerians, Moroccans, and south-east Asians. The successful candidates will not be full voting members on the town council, but will act as advisers and as spokesmen for the immigrant community.

There will be a second tier of delegates to be elected later who will come from all the immigrant groups and will advise the three representatives.

Mons is a dull, rather than a scruffy, dormitory suburb. Its public housing does not rise too high, and the neat lawns and shrubs and the window boxes breaking up the concrete give no sign of social breakdown or hopelessness.

Snoring may be a health risk

COPENHAGEN: Snoring is not just a nuisance to sleeping partners, but in many cases may be as bad for the snorer as smoking or obesity, according to a study by Danish doctors. Dr Poul Jennum of the Sleep Research Institute of the Copenhagen County Hospital said yesterday that the findings of an examination of more than 800 men and women, aged 70, will shortly be presented to a medical congress at Seattle, Washington.

He told Copenhagen's Politiken newspaper that he and two colleagues found that 10 per cent of the elderly men and 7 per cent of the women suffered from a serious snoring syndrome, making their nights a constant struggle against suffocation.

Dr Jennum, who hopes to broaden his research to a larger group of people of all ages, said other observations at the institute already indicate that snoring is most widespread among middle-aged men.

He said snoring became a syndrome when the snorer wakes up more than 30 times during a night to gasp for air after the tongue has

blocked respiration for at least 10 seconds. The investigations showed that some snorers stop breathing for up to 30 seconds at a time.

The consequences of this, according to the institute, included lowering the blood's oxygen content and increasing blood pressure while the failure to go into deep sleep affected metabolism and hormone production.

The researchers said that future research should focus on snoring as a strain on the body similar to that resulting from obesity, smoking and generally unhealthy living.—AP.

Racial coexistence in Belgium is 'a model' says Pope

Brussels: The Pope yesterday urged Belgians to overcome language and racial barriers and said their success could be an example to the rest of the world.

Speaking alternately in French and Dutch, he told a congregation at the National Basilica which included King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola that there were more factors uniting the country's majority Dutch-speaking Flemings and French-speaking Walloons than dividing them.

Foster your model of coexistence, it can be an example to the rest of the world," he said. The Pope touched on the sensitive issue of language, which permeates Belgian political, social, and religious life, during an open-air mass for more than 100,000 people outside the church on Koekelberg Hill.

He praised Belgium's traditional openness, which had inspired cultural and economic exchanges with neighbouring countries. "Do not give up these riches, nor your peaceful cohabitation. Honour the mutual respect and dialogue be-

tween the different Belgian communities and towards the foreigners here," he said. Amid prolonged applause, he added: "Remember: there are more things that unite you than divide you."

The Pope's appeal on behalf of foreigners was seen as a reference to racial problems involving North Africans and Turks in the capital, where a number of communes have begun restricting the number of residence permits given to non-Europeans.

Earlier, the Pope met two men and a woman who, as children more than 50 years ago, reported seeing apparitions of the Virgin Mary in a hawthorn bush in the agricultural town of Beauraing. The Pope knelt at a marble statue of the Madonna, scrubbed clean since vandals poured engine oil on it two days ago. The statue had its hands broken in two earlier attacks.

Four bakers presented the Pope with a 120lb birthday cake, topped by sugar models of the Madonna, scrubbed clean since vandals poured engine oil on it two days ago. The statue had its hands broken in two earlier attacks.

Union protests fail to halt price rises

Warsaw: The Government has said it will go ahead with plans to raise the price of meat despite objections by leaders of legal trade unions and Solidarity.

The Trade Union Minister, Mr Stanislaw Ciosek, said in a statement published by the official press at the weekend: "Raising these prices is necessary. The full arguments behind the economic necessity for such moves have been presented in long months of public debate on the issue."

The authorities announced earlier that a rise of between 10 and 15 per cent in the cost of meat, which is rationed, would take place in July but did not fix a date.

The OPZZ grouping of legal trade unions and the banned Solidarity free trade union have separately urged pay and pension rises to compensate for the increases.

In a justification of Government policy, Mr Ciosek said pay rises had already outstripped price increases and warned that the disparity could cause "an acute shortage of many products."

Official statistics showed that there was a sharp rise in earnings in March when the current round of price increases began. In industry,

wages were up 26 per cent on March, 1984.

Mr Ciosek said the compensation demanded by the OPZZ would cost the government 60 billion zlotys (\$300 million).

The figures provided by Mr Ciosek indicated that wage growth in the first quarter of 1985 had reached the target set by the Government for the entire year.

Informed sources said workers in key sectors of the economy had been able to force managers to compensate them with wage rises as soon as the increase in food prices was felt.

Mr Ciosek said the Government would honour a promise to the legal unions to submit a detailed report for discussion with them on the increases in incomes and living costs in the first six months of the year.

Western sources said the high level of pay settlements reflected the authorities' desire to avoid industrial militancy as factories struggle to make up \$600 million production lost as a result of the harsh winter.

Swiss bank boss guilty of swindles

Geneva: One of Switzerland's longest banking scandals ended this weekend when a once-prominent private banker, Robert Leclerc, was found guilty of diverting millions of dollars from his clients' accounts.

At Geneva criminal court on Saturday he was found guilty of 60 charges of fraud and breach of confidence.

Leclerc, aged 67, will be sentenced today and the public prosecutor is expected to demand a maximum 15-year sentence.

The five-week trial closed the case of Leclerc and Co, a private Geneva-based bank which the Federal Banking Commission shut down in 1977, after an investigation showed a consolidated balance sheet deficit of 394 million Swiss francs.

A director of the bank, Charles Boucard, committed suicide shortly after the closure.

In 1978, Leclerc was arrested and spent 15 months in jail despite repeated pleas for release on the grounds of ill health. He was finally freed on a 500,000 franc bail.

In an impassioned final plea to the jury, Leclerc admitted mistakes but said he had never dipped into any of his clients' accounts. His lawyers argued that the Banking Commission caused the clients' financial losses by unnecessarily closing the bank.

The public prosecutor was joined by five lawyers pressing a civil action against the banker on behalf of some of the 4,182 clients who lost money, accusing him of using fraud and deception to conceal 25 million Swiss francs in secret accounts between 1970 and 1977.—Reuters.

Taxi-driver murdered

From Jane Walker in Madrid

A 41-year-old Basque taxi-driver has become the latest victim in the wave of terrorist violence sweeping through northern Spain.

Mr Juan Maria Uriarte, a cousin of the Bishop of Bilbao, was found murdered in his taxi on the outskirts of Bilbao early on Saturday morning. His body was abandoned on a deserted country road with four bullets in the head. He had disappeared 12 hours earlier after driving off with a group of customers.

Police discovered Mr Uriarte's body after receiving a telephone call from Eta telling them where he was to be found.

OVERSEAS NEWS

THE GUARDIAN Monday May 20 1985

Indian Government proposes tough laws to fight violence

Anti-terrorist bill faces civil rights opposition

From Eric Silver in New Delhi

Civil liberties groups are pressing for changes in a tough new anti-terrorism law which the Government is trying to force through Parliament in the next two days.

The bill, published on Saturday, imposes capital punishment for any act of terrorism causing death, with sentences ranging from five years to life imprisonment for other acts of violence designed to "overawe the Government or to strike terror in the people". The act is to be tried by special courts in camera if necessary, with limited right of appeal.

A week after 85 civilians were killed by Sikh extremist bombings in Delhi and three

rights lawyer and former president of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, said yesterday: "The definition of disruptive activities is so very wide that any demand or suggestion for self-determination of People in any part of the country will be punishable by a sentence up to imprisonment for life... the Government is taking advantage of popular feeling after the Delhi bombings."

When he presented the bill to Parliament on Saturday, the Law Minister, Mr Asoke Sen, said that India was facing an "unprecedented danger", but opposition MPs resisted his attempt to push the measure through all its stages on the same day.

Mr Madhu Dandavate, parliamentary leader of the Janata Party, objected that such an important bill, touching on the civil liberties of citizens, could not be dealt with so hastily. They had received the 13-page text only that morning.

The bill, which extends the drastic power in force for the past year in Punjab to the rest of the country, will now be debated today in the Lower House and tomorrow in the Upper House. The Government will then be free to activate it immediately for up to two years.

The police arrested two more suspected Sikh terrorists in Delhi at the weekend, bringing the total since last week-end's bombings to 11. They also uncovered a gunmaking factory in the Trinaragar suburb.

In a report from London yesterday, the Indian Express claimed that Sikh militants plotting to kill Mr Rajiv Gandhi in the United States were being trained by a former British SAS man. The instructor was not named.

Quoting a "high level American source", the correspondent said that four or five Sikhs were being trained by the British expert, who was alleged to charge a high fee, "especially if the training is to be for subversive activities like blowing up bridges, government buildings, and dams."

Mr V. M. Tarkunde, a civil

Sikh leader warns Government against 'insults to our religion'

AS A purge of the leadership of the Sikh Akali Dal party sends the moderates into hiding, Ajay Bose, in Amritsar, assesses the new leader as a figurehead for the extremist students' federation.

BABA JOGINDER SINGH, new leader of the Sikh militant party, the Akali Dal, has declared: "The Sikhs will fight to get back the rights taken away from them by the Government."

The 83-year-old father of the Sikh religious zealot Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who was killed during the army action in the Golden Temple last year, assumed control in Amritsar last week after a coup by extremists removed the moderate leadership of the party.

Surrounded by his youthful followers in his office at the Golden Temple complex here, he is full of fiery rhetoric which belies his frail appearance.

"There will be arid consequences if atrocities continue to be committed against the Sikhs. The Sikhs do not want to harm anybody, but we will not tolerate any insult to our religion," he said in one of his first interviews to the international press.

He is even more militant in his speeches at Sikh temples. Addressing a religious congregation yesterday, he bitterly criticised the government ban on carrying lethal weapons inside temple premises. "Our tenth guru

had described swords, spears, guns, and cannons as our saints. Shall we listen to the Government or follow our guru?"

After decades of seclusion in his tiny village in Punjab, Bhindranwale's father has been hassled into prominence by the extremists who are making a bid for power in Sikh politics by cashing in on the popularity and martyr image of his son.

Unlike his son, however, the Baba seems to be merely a figurehead and is believed to have only a symbolic role in the new Sikh political hierarchy.

With four of its members in jail or abroad and three refusing to participate, the nine-member committee headed by Baba Joginder Singh, which has been formed to lead the Akali Dal, is also little more than a front for the real power behind the party — the extremist youth organisation, the All India Sikh Students Federation, which was banned by the late Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi.

Last month, Mr Rajiv Gandhi in an attempt to buy peace with the Sikh militants, lifted the ban on the Sikh students' federation and offered to release its arrested leaders and activists. Instead of responding favourably to Mr Gandhi's peace initiative, the Sikh students have returned to extremism. The federation, in its convention in Patiala, Punjab, last week declared



● Sant Harchand Singh Longowal: in hiding

that it would wage a relentless struggle to achieve a separate Sikh homeland — Khalistan.

Baba Joginder Singh not only presided over the convention, but presented a ceremonial sword to the widow of Beant Singh, one of the assassins who shot Mrs Gandhi, as a reward for the assassination.

The growing tide of extremism in Punjab has forced a retreat by the moderate Sikh leaders who have been unable, so far, to challenge the younger and more fanatical section of the Sikhs.

The Akali Dal leader, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, at first tried to keep pace with the extremists by singing the praises of Sant Bhindranwale

and even the assassins of Mrs Gandhi, but was replaced by Baba Joginder Singh.

After a token protest, Longowal and his colleagues, a former Punjab chief minister, Prakash Singh Badal and others, have resigned from the leadership leaving the field open for the extremists.

Followers of Sant Longowal and other moderate leaders are still trying to persuade them to stay on in Sikh politics and are holding a meeting in Amritsar this week to decide whether their resignations should be accepted. Observers here, however, are sceptical about whether the panicky moderates would accept the reins of leadership even if a majority of the Akali Dal members put their faith in them.

At the moment, Sant Longowal and other moderates are in hiding, refusing to meet the press.

To a large extent, they are afraid of coming out openly against the return of extremist politics for fear of physical retaliation. The police have already discovered a terrorist plot to kill Sant Longowal and he and his colleagues are living under tight security.

The new extremist offensive and the retreat of traditional Sikh politics seem to be inter-connected. While fear of terrorist reprisals has driven the moderates into hiding, it is the lack of a mature leadership among the Sikhs that is the main contributory factor to the rise of terrorism.

Blacks unite to fight apartheid

From Patrick Laurence in Johannesburg

Hundreds of supporters of warring black movements yesterday resolved to bury their differences, at a meeting in Soweto organised by Nobel prizewinner Bishop Desmond Tutu of Johannesburg.

The meeting took place at Regina Mundi cathedral, under the eye of armed police and in the wake of fierce fighting among members of the United Democratic Front, the Azanian People's Organisation, and Inkatha, which left two people dead.

It was the culmination of a peace mission launched a fortnight ago by black clergymen of several denominations, after several attacks on leaders of rival black movements. At least five blacks died in the violence.

The Soweto meeting was only one of several meetings of reconciliation held yesterday in black townships along the Witwatersrand and in the Vaal triangle.

The top leadership of the UDF and Azapo were unable to attend. Most UDF leaders are either in detention or accused of treason in the trial which starts today. The Azapo president, Mr Ishmael Makhele, was in Port Elizabeth for the funeral of two Azapo members who were killed in recent clashes.

Mr Merthion Morobe, an executive member of the Transvaal branch of the UDF, was loudly cheered when he told the 2,000-strong crowd that they had surprised the police by joining together in an act of reconciliation.

The battle lines were clearly drawn between those in favour of black liberation inside the cathedral and the police representatives of the apartheid state outside, he said.

Acknowledging that there were differences in method between the black organisations present, he said: "But we cannot allow the agents of apartheid to defeat us from our struggle."

Mr George Wauchope, a vice-president of Azapo, dismissed the charge that police agents were primarily responsible for attacks on the leaders of rival movements.

"The system has done some of the dirty work, but 90 per cent of it (we) blacks have done," he said. "We have proof of it."

Mr Sitho Ngunane, of the Inkatha youth brigade, declared that Inkatha had no quarrel with either the UDF or Azapo, as neither organisation was responsible for the pass system or the break-up of South Africa through the establishment of quasi-independent states such as Transkei and Ciskei.

Bishop Tutu was loudly applauded when he told the audience that freedom was at hand, that blacks were "princes of the kingdom of God" and that they should not leave the cathedral "bowing their heads, apologising for their existence."

Gadafy call for more revolution

Khartoum: The Libyan leader Colonel Muammar

Gadafy, arrived unexpectedly in Khartoum for talks with Sudan's new leaders yesterday and called for the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

He said in an arrival statement that he had come to congratulate the Sudanese people on the April 6 military coup which removed President Jafar Numeiri and said Egypt's turn would come to overthrow "the reactionary regime" in Cairo.

He is the first foreign head of state to visit Sudan since the coup led by General Abdul-Rahman Swaredadhab, who now heads a transitional military council and was at the airport to greet him.

"I congratulate the Sudanese army which took the side of the masses and ousted the reactionary regime of Numeiri," the Libyan leader said.

"I call on the masses in the Arab world to follow suit and liberate their countries, and I call on the armed forces in the Arab world to join the masses," he added.

The Libyan news agency, Jana, said he planned to visit Islamic holy sites after his talks with the Sudanese monarch. It gave no details of the talks, but diplomats said they were likely to have covered developments in the Iran-Iraq war.

— Reuters.

UN condemns rugby tour

Paris: A UN conference

against apartheid yesterday urged a strengthening of the sports boycott of South Africa, and warned that a New Zealand rugby tour of the country could spark big protests and violence. A declaration by the three-day conference strongly condemned the All Blacks Rugby Union tour planned for July 24 to September 14 as a gross violation of the boycott. — Reuters.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Florida fires spread

FIRE spread across thousands of acres of Florida countryside yesterday, ending hopes that improving weather conditions would help bring the blazes under control.

The fires, the worst in the state's history, have already killed two firemen, consumed more than 115,000 acres of brush and wood and destroyed at least 150 homes, and forced the evacuation of thousands of north Florida residents.

Damage to property and wildlife is estimated at more than \$80 million. Although winds died down yesterday and light rains fell on some parts of the state, firemen were unable to contain 60 fires raging along the Florida peninsula. — Reuters.

Church protest

CHURCH of Scientology officials said at the weekend that they would stage a protest today against a jury verdict that awarded \$83 million in punitive damages to a woman in Portland, Oregon, who said she was victimised by the church. Mrs Julie Christofferson Tichenbourne, aged 27, was found to be a victim of "wanton misconduct" by the church. — Reuters.

Climbing high

AN Italian climber, M Reinhold Messner, said yesterday that he has conquered the 26,781-foot mount Dhaulagiri in Nepal and become the first man to set foot on 12 peaks taller than 20,240 feet. Mr Messner, aged 41, of Villnoss, and Mr Johann Kammerlander, aged 20, Tofers spent about half an hour at the top. — AP.

Rent law dropped

PRESIDENT Nyerere's government has reversed a 14-year-old policy banning ownership of property for rent in Tanzania. He said on the radio at the weekend: "Today, in 1985, we have no reason to continue this law." — AP.

Ancient dentistry

ISRAELI archaeologists have dug up evidence of ancient dentistry — a root canal work on a tooth of a skeleton more than 2,000 years old. The skeleton, recently found in the Negev desert, is that of a Nabatean man who lived in the third of second century BC. — Reuters.

Record walk

A British soldier, Malcolm Barnish, has walked non-stop for almost a week. Sergeant Barnish, aged 35, stationed in Dortmund, West Germany, walked 412.08 miles in a record six days, 10 hours, and 22 minutes. — Reuters.

Tightly packed

BANGLADESH is the world's most densely populated country with nearly 101.5 million people crammed into 55,000 square miles, according to a research report published in Dhaka by the Washington-based Population Research Bureau. — Reuters.

Writers' appeal

A GROUP of US writers has urged the Polish leader, General Jaruzelski to free the dissident historian, Mr Adam Michnik, who is charged with inciting unrest. Mr Michnik and two others were arrested at a meeting to organise a 15-minute general strike against rises in food prices. — AP.

New leader

PORTUGAL'S Social Democratic Party elected its second leader, Mr Amalio Cavaco Silva, in three months yesterday, but its three-day congress failed to heal bitter rifts about the candidate the party should support in forthcoming presidential elections. — Reuters.

Books seized

A CAIRO court yesterday ordered the confiscation of new editions of the Arabic classic A Thousand and One Nights, saying that it posed a threat to morals and was pornographic. Three booksellers were fined \$800 each for trying to distribute the new editions. — Reuters.

On the air

RADIO MARTI, the US Government's long-postponed project to broadcast news to Cuba, will go on the air today, Senators Paula Hawkins and Lawton Chiles said in Washington at the weekend. — AP.

Death sentences

SEVEN Afghan government agents have been sentenced to death by a resistance court in Uruzgan province for working with Soviet forces in Afghanistan, an Afghan guerrilla group said at the weekend. — AP.

Kampuchea 'day of hate' for Pol Pot

From Nicholas Cumming-Brace in Bangkok

The Hang Samrin Government of Kampuchea is staging rallies and demonstrations throughout the country today to mark a "day of hatred" against the Khmer Rouge regime which murdered a vast number of people during its years in power from 1975 to 1978.

The date has not previously held any special significance, but May 20, 1975, was selected by the Phnom Penh authorities as "the day the Pol Pot regime began to implement its systematic overt and savage genocidal policy against the Kampuchean people," an official announcement said.

The Phnom Penh authorities say Pol Pot's regime butchered 2.7 million people out of the estimated 7.5 million population, while Western estimates of the number killed mostly range from hundreds of thousands to 1.5 million.

To mark the occasion, "a day which gives life to the hate against Pol Pot's genocidal clique," the authorities have called for countrywide ceremonies to commemorate the dead of those years, including Vietnamese "presumably those killed during 1978 invasion which overthrew the Khmer Rouge government and installed the present government."

The authorities have also directed that sorrowful families "or those with members in the anti-Vietnamese resistance, should write letters or join other activities to win back 'the misled persons'."

The authorities' moves coincide with efforts by the Khmer-Rouge-dominated anti-Vietnamese resistance coalition to recover from the destruction of their bases on the Thai-Kampuchean border this year.

China, the main arms supplier for the resistance, is understood to have sent large consignments of weapons to all three factions in the coalition. The head of the non-Communist Khmer People's National Liberation Front, Mr San Samn, said at the weekend that the arms had reached his group and that deliveries of certain items had exceeded expectations.

Among the conditions which the Syrians appear to have posed for holding the summit is that convincing steps be taken to prevent a battle for Jezzine, the Christian town high in the hills above Sidon.

Prospects of this improved on Saturday when Elie Hobeika, the new leader of the Lebanese Forces militia, made another conciliatory gesture towards Syria and his Lebanese Druze-Muslim adversaries: he announced that he was pulling all his men out of Jezzine and the Israeli "security zone," and bringing them back to Beirut.

He was doing this, he said, to prevent a recurrence of what happened in the Sidon area. Mr Hobeika thereby seemed to be acknowledging that his own militia — or perhaps his former leader, Dr Samir Geagea, whom he replaced 10 days ago — was at least partly to blame for the calamity that befell a string of

Christian villages above the city.

After offering their "protection" to the villages, from which they bombarded Sidon for six weeks, the Lebanese Forces precipitately withdrew, and the city's Muslim militias, seeking revenge, overran the villages whose inhabitants fled to Jezzine, the "security zone" or the Maronite Christian heartlands above Beirut.

Mr Hobeika called for the rapid deployment of units of the Lebanese army "enjoying the confidence of all parties and especially the notable and people of Jezzine and its environs."

At the same time, by way of demonstrating that the Israeli option is at an end — Mr Hobeika announced the closure of the Lebanese Forces' "representation office" in Jerusalem. The office opened, with much fanfare, last May.

General Lahd has refused to withdraw his force of some 200 men from the town, having pledged to defend it against all comers. Although, after the fall of Christian villages above Sidon, Druze and Muslim leaders insisted that they would not storm the town, leaving it to local leaders to persuade

Sporadic violence flares in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO: Sporadic violence flared in northern and eastern Sri Lanka at the weekend, but the military authorities denied reports that large numbers of Tamil civilians had been killed after being forced to dig their own graves.

Security officials said six separatist guerrillas fighting for an independent Tamil state died on Saturday when security forces raided their training camp in a cave south of Batticaloa City, on the east coast.

In Jaffna City in the north, forms of the country's ethnic crisis, there were conflicting reports of fresh violence.

Residents said that four people were killed and several injured when firing broke out after a blast on Saturday at a fort where police and soldiers were based.

Security officials said the deaths had not been confirmed. They added that five soldiers were injured when a car bomb exploded inside a Jaffna college.

Posters and pamphlets appearing in the streets said a group calling itself the Red Brigade was responsible for the bomb attack, the officials said.

Police said that there was no truth in reports circulating in Colombo that large numbers of Tamil civilians

had been killed in renewed ethnic clashes in Eastern Province at the weekend.

Batticaloa's top government official reported no violence except for the discovery of four bodies of Tamils with gunshot wounds at Chenkaladi two days ago.

People in Batticaloa, however, said some Tamil civilians had been killed in Alankannattu town. They could not give details. — Reuters.

Syrian conditions delay Lebanese summit

From David Hirst in Beirut

The conference between President Amin Gemayel and President Hafez Assad of Syria, originally expected by the weekend, has been put off until the Syrians are persuaded that it has a good chance of success.

The summit, though not mentioned by the Syrian media, is being preceded by increasingly insistent Syrian forecasts that a settlement of Lebanon's 10-year civil war is at hand.

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Personnel: in Lebanon: President Amin Gemayel, the former leader of the Lebanese Forces; and Mr Nabih Berri, the Lebanese Shi'ite leader



Personnel: in Lebanon: President Amin Gemayel, the former leader of the Lebanese Forces; and Mr Nabih Berri, the Lebanese Shi'ite leader

Sex guide for Islam

ANKARA: A sex manual written by a Muslim priest is the talk of the town and may become a bestseller despite denunciations of "public indecency."

Sexual Islam according to Islam, a 700-page how-to-do-it book by Imam Ali Rida Demircan, explains how good Muslims should choose a mate, perform in bed, and avoid major and minor sexual sins under Islamic rules.

The author quotes from passages in the Koran, and the Hadis and Sunnet attributed to Mohammed, to support his maxims on proper Islamic sex life.

The book is full of sometimes graphic details of Mohammed's own sex life with his nine wives. Demircan advocates a return to the practices of pre-republican days, before the secularising reforms of Kemal Ataturk, when women were sequestered in harems. Under modern Islam, a man can have four wives.

A virtuous Muslim woman will not show any part of her body to a man other than her husband.

Islam is not against masturbation, but considers as sins homosexuality, adultery, birth control, and nudity by the book says. Wives should also be discouraged from going to beauty salons and similar places, where women gather, to avoid lesbianism, Demircan says. — AP.

Why this new arts school has 134 teachers and only 30 students.

It's no hoodwink.

The School of Communication Arts actually has nearly 5 teachers for every student.

What's more, these particular teachers can't even have the familiar student criticism levelled at them:

"If you're so bloody good, how come you're not working in the business?"

They are in the business.

Though readily on hand for teaching, in their spare time they run the country's major advertising agencies and design companies.

As a student, you'll thus be taught by only the very best in the business.

Art direction by, amongst others, Paul Arden of Saatchis, Ron Brown of AMV, Neil Godfrey of CDP and John Hegarty of BBH.

Design by John Larkin and Michael Peters.

Copywriting by David Abbott of AMV, John Salmon of CDP and Jeremy Sinclair of Saatchis.

Photography by Terence Donovan, Stak, Max Forsythe and John Swannell.

(Put into perspective, that's like being taught to drive by Niki Lauda, Jackie Stewart, Stirling Moss and Fangio.)

For this school is absolutely like no other.

Not only is it a seat of learning, but also a mental adventure playground.

A place where you'll be encouraged to develop a totally new approach to creativity.

You'll be taught to go bananas.

To liberate your imagination. Think more freely. More instinctively.

Your ideas, both visual and literal, in sound and in moving images, will have to be startling. Original enough to blow even your own socks off.

You'll have to work hard. Damn hard.

At this school, you'll not be cossetted, nor protected, in any way, shape or form, from the outside world. (You'll often find yourself flung onto

the street, observing the people you're talking to.)

You'll work on actual problems for actual clients. To the same deadlines an agency or design company work to, under the same pressure.

Not only that, you'll follow all your work through. You'll have to come up with the idea.

Sell it. Visualise it. Write it. Art direct it. Shoot it. Illustrate it. Cast it. Direct it. Produce it. Dub it. Edit it.

In fact, the only slightly unreal aspect of the course (re advertising, in particular) is that lunch is only an hour long, and you'll often be expected to work through it. (And emerge sober.)

You will also develop an appreciation of animatics, film

direction, computing, layout, model making, print, radio and video.

Together with the rudiments of business management, marketing, media, publishing philosophy, sociology, psychology and ecology.

For the entire length of the course (36 weeks) you'll be under the watchful eye of a 'Godfather.'

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SPECIAL THANKS TO CDP, MAX FORSYTH, RABBIT REPRO, JIGSAW ARTISTS AND BORKEYS FOR THEIR HELP WITH THIS ADVERTISEMENT. THIS SPACE HAS BEEN GIVEN, IN SUPPORT OF THE SCHOOL, BY AUDI & VOLKSWAGEN.

THE PEACOCK Enquiry will examine the funding of the BBC. Like many professional broadcasters, I consider the licence fee to be far and away the best funding system for a corporation. Over the years it has delivered a massive and unarguably well programmed service of the highest quality across a uniquely broad front. It is resented by very few but those few are powerful.

There is one fundamental point which, I hope, will be recognised by the Peacock Committee from the start. The licence fee was introduced and has been regularly increased in order to fund public service broadcasting as practised by the BBC. It started when there was a monopoly. Since the introduction of ITV, since the Pilkington Report and most especially since the setting up of Channel Four, it is quite clear that now there is a public service as much as the BBC. Therefore if — as the Prime Minister has said — we would welcome — this is encouraged to take advertising to prop up its public service function then, in fairness, ITV and Channel Four ought to have a proportionate percentage of the licence fee.

It would not only be fairer which would be evoked; it could be — as David Plowright of Granada pointed out — a very survival of the fittest system itself. If the licence fee is for public service broadcasting, ITV deserves its slice.

It is still not widely enough known how much the commercial television system is geared to — its bawls would say constrained by — public service responsibilities which are entered into on receipt of the franchise. It could do so very easily: against the apparent best interests of ITV — by the IBA. In fact to describe the ITV system as "commercial" would trigger off mockery from any genuinely commercial broadcaster. Ted Turner — the greatest piratical entrepreneur of American television — would regard our homey ITV as wholly philanthropic. ITV sternly ignores the first rule of capitalism time and again: it fails to maximise profits. It could do so very easily: it could peddle pap ad perpetuum and cut the stuff that rarely moves into the top 10, 20 or even 50. In doing so it would



If the BBC is allowed advertising revenue, then ITV should get a slice of the licence cake, argues Melvyn Bragg

A licence to compete

cut some of its best drama, (even Jewel in the Crown was not — in maximising terms — a ratings winner) its most original programmes (Spitting Image, its current affairs coverage, its arts, some of its documentaries, and investigative programmes, some news bulletins, and a great deal of Channel Four. Most of these programmes — to one degree or another — go onto the air pitching to and for a minority audience, sometimes a barely discernible audience. In either event, financially unprofitable and largely uncommercial. Television advertising in this country is a licence to publish a public service: profits follow that flag.

If it goes for such programmes and such audiences because it is enjoined to by the nature



advertising and should it decide — as its chairman Stuart Young said in a remarkable interview with Brian Walden — to go "flat out" then whether in the short term, the long term or, as some predict, permanently, ITV's real revenue would decline perhaps disastrously. In order to prevent redundancies already threatened in some regional companies — and maintain the financial integrity of their companies, the leaders of ITV would have to go for more revenue. The only quick methods to achieve that are to go down-market; or chop off the financially weaker parts, ie, some of the regions.

ITV as I have discovered is full of people of considerable ingenuity and toughness who take a lot of pride in what they do and they would fight hard

It is this big money which gives the profits (not huge, the licence to print £4.5 is long over). The profits enable the companies to pursue loss making public service enterprises with talent and enthusiasm. Though not, it should be added, with the apparently limitless resources of our licensed sister Beeb.

The quality end of television — e.g. documentaries — and the extra quality in popular productions costs big money and, as a first self-protective measure, this might have to be cut by the companies. Caught in a steel trap, ITV might well have to be the fox that gnaws off its own leg in this case — high-cost/low audience quality.

Should ITV do this or should they preserve the quality and, however reluctantly, cut off the lifelines to whole fields of broadcasting — the smaller regions and — thinking the unthinkable — Channel Four? Such choices might well seem alarmist today; tomorrow they might be commonplace should the BBC's licence fee be supplemented by advertising.

If then the ITV system were to be so badly threatened that it would genuinely cease to be able to continue as it is today, then why should there not be a tit-for-tat? In such a case let the licence fee be for the public service: let David Plowright, Jeremy Isaacs, Paul Fox, Brian Tesler, Brian Cowell et al have it as their basic income just as Alastair Milne, Brian Vauxham, Bill Cotton, Michael Grade et al have it as theirs. 50-50?

Media File....

Derek Jameson

THERE is no better way of appealing to an editor's sporting instincts than to write a letter warning him not to publish something, especially if he had not thought about it in the first place.

Mr Robert Maxwell did just that in telling the editor of the Sun to keep his hands off the Mirror's "exclusive rights" to the story of the murdered Playboy bunny girl Dorothy Stratten.

Knowing Kelvin MacKenzie, he must have jumped ten feet in the air and roared for cuttings. There would have been a lot of them. The story has been told countless times in the past five years. The Mail on Sunday "did it big" as we say, a month ago. Mr Maxwell's intervention was a part in the long and bitter battle to prevent the Mirror diary lost no time in bashing The Sun as a kleptomaniac gang of petty thieves and avaricious bastards. Mr Maxwell's intervention was a part in the long and bitter battle to prevent the Mirror diary lost no time in bashing The Sun as a kleptomaniac gang of petty thieves and avaricious bastards.

Heady stuff from a newspaper which dropped its world renowned title only a few days earlier to rename itself "The Mirror" in a masthead not a million miles removed typographically from that of The Sun.

MacKenzie published anyway, carefully avoiding the Mirror's copyrighted adaptation of the Stratten story as told by Hollywood director Peter Bogdanovich, the man for whom the leftie husband, who butchered her before killing himself.

What we have here is a classic Fleet Street spilling operation aimed at sinking the Bogdanovich story, flagship of a £10 million promotion campaign launched by Maxwell in pursuit of his pledge to restore the Mirror to its former glory by overtaking The Sun.

The spoiler is designed to neutralise the enemy's razzmatazz by running the same story, preferably bigger, better and sooner. If nothing else, that prevents your readers from being aware of the rival's big buy — known in the trade as "property".

But there is a far more enticing prospect. It is a comparatively simple matter to play into the other side's costly television commercials — the main impetus behind every major promotion.

Assuming that many people remember the subject of a commercial rather than the salesman, you simply put up a big headline with key words from the rival story.

On Dorothy Stratten, the Mirror took its main line from Bogdanovich's title The Killing of the Unicorn, which to tabloid readers must sound like a cross between Grimm's fairy tales and unit trust fund.

The Mirror would have to rely on its commercials to focus readers' minds on Playboy, bunnies, love and death. And The Sun's headlines? THE GREAT PLAYBOY LOVE FUED N wonder they were gnawing their way into the Mirror's skyscraper. Remember that a tiny confused fraction of the television audience could easily land 50,000 extra readers in the end.

As it happened, the whole brouhaha fizzled out and was totally dwarfed by the Bradford football disaster.

Of course the Mirror has nothing to get sanctimonious about. It pulled the greatest spoiler of the day when I was editor of the Daily Express and William Hickey, other well known names, and Peter Taylor, found the missing Joyce McKinney in The Case of the Manacled Mormon.

Delighted with our scoop in Atlanta, Georgia, I ran the full story. I was a virgin whose desperate love for the missionary Kirk Anderson had foolishly led her to abduct him and then skip back to Britain.

The Mirror went for the jugular. Dusting off a dossier it had prepared for the end of legal proceedings, it demolished Joyce's simple tale by revealing all the sordid details — about her previous life as a bondage model.

It was one of my own spoils that got me on the wrong side of Rupert Murdoch.

Short of a front page splash one quiet Saturday at the News of the World, I spotted a Mail on Sunday "puff" advertising "the greatest spy story ever told".

Ah ha, I thought, that will be on television tonight. We must get "Spy" into our main headline. What's the story? My diligent staff came up with a new book by the distinguished ex-Reuter correspondent, Anthony Grey, suggesting that the missing Australian premier, Mr Harold Holt, had been a Chinese Communist spy smuggled out of the country by submarine.

Now I have always had my suspicions about Holt's disappearance while swimming off Melbourne in 1967.

Well, it's a funny old world. Think of Philip Froome, Stonehouse. Strange things do happen. Let's run the story: LOST PREMIER WAS RED SPY.

Sad to say, the Mail story had nothing to do with Holt. It was about some obscure South African naval officer. Even worse, the Murdoch and Holt forebears apparently sailed together on the boat to Botany Bay. It was not long before I was on my bike.

Arlen Harris on changes in Channel 4's ethnic minority programmes

Black power

AN INDEPENDENT black production company will be given the contract to produce Channel Four's current affairs programme for the ethnic minorities says Farrukh Dhondy, Commissioning Editor for Multi-Cultural Programmes at Channel 4.

The contract is worth over £1 million a year, and its award to the black independent sector is a major blow to the big television companies who were keen to fill the slot.

Input into ethnic programming is likely to be shared by four black film companies — Bandung Productions, Azad, Acacia and Anancy, as well as up to 10 other ITV and independent companies.

But a black independent is set to succeed London Weekend Television who have been producing Black on Black for Caribbean, Asian and Eastern Eye for Asians on alternate weeks for the last three years. The new programme is due to go out in April 1986.

The decision last year by Farrukh Dhondy to end LWT's contract came as an unpleasant shock to company executives. LWT argued in favour of a multi-item magazine type show whereas Farrukh Dhondy wanted a more political approach with input from several independent companies.

The new programme will be part and parcel of a radical approach to ethnic minority broadcasting by Farrukh Dhondy. The aim is to increase the news content, end the separation of Afro-Caribbean and Asian sections, and move the popular culture elements from the programme into their own slot.

Another significant change is that it will go out at an earlier time in the evening aiming at a younger audience. The black community was vociferous in their criticisms of Channel Four for relegating Black on Black and Eastern Eye to the late night "ghetto" slot.

The new programming reflects Dhondy's desire to encourage the growth of a black film sector. He said: "It is part of my job to encourage the growth of black production companies. I am lending the ground this year, helping companies to get experience and expertise."

LWT have been asked to produce ideas for a black entertainment and chat show that will act as a back-up providing a series of entertainment programmes.

The new programme will be more hard edged, with greater "street credibility" than either Black on Black or Eastern Eye. Leading figures in some of the production companies have been heavily involved with radical black politics in Britain and will have both the contacts and the knowledge to produce hardhitting, contentious programmes.

Bandung is likely to concentrate on black Britain. Its programme editors are Tariq Ali and Dar us Salam. The new Today collective, which this year is producing seven programmes for Channel Four, its first film, coming out in June, is The Painter and the Pest. Azad is developing four ideas, the first of which is a leading figure in the company is H. O. Nazareth, a black director and a writer, who has been involved in radical black politics for some time.

Horace Ove of Anancy Productions is a black director who has worked for both the BBC and independent television companies. The company is likely to specialise on the arts. Acacia includes Nareesh Bedi a highly experienced cameraman and Ed Milner a director. Both are in India working on a documentary for Channel Four.



"Pickets were largely boring, uneventful and increasingly fruitless rituals." Picture of striking Notts miners by Don McPhee

NUM disorganisation meant the media didn't always get the miners' message, reports Patrick Wintour

The lamp the miners failed to light

"HUNDREDS of strikes, with the usual practice of picketing, occur, to which public attention is never drawn; they are not of sufficient importance to attract a crowd of reporters anxious to chronicle every fact which tells against the workmen. Such strikes sometimes result in favour of the men; at other times in favour of the masters; picketing is resorted to in most cases, but the public hear nothing about the alleged evils of the system. Why? Because they seldom take place. But let one single instance be resorted to, and the entire newspaper press will record the fact, not infrequently colouring it so as to distort its real nature and significance (or insignificance); 'leaders' are written in denunciation, not only of the actual perpetrators of the offence but of the whole class to which they belong, until it becomes a settled conviction in the minds of the majority that these cases are perpetually recurring."

These words come not from the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom's pamphlet, published this week on the media's coverage of the coal strike, but from George Orwell, an extremely moderate and prominent Victorian trade unionist.

Misreporting of strikes evidently has a long pedigree stretching back well beyond the rise of Lambert Le Roux or the miners' strike. Indeed distortion is built into the concept of news. As one reporter explained to an exasperated Kim Howells, the press spokesman for the South Wales miners, "a lot of planes land at Heathrow every day, we only film the ones that crash." Fickles during the strike were largely boring, uneventful and increasingly fruitless rituals. Occasionally there was trouble and as a result they became "news".

Since the miners' strike ended there has been a fierce debate on the Left about the relevance of winning public opinion and the media's role in the strike's outcome. On the one hand has been the advocates of moral force, on the other supporters of physical force. Mr Peter Carter, the industrial organiser of the Communist Party and a moral force man, has argued that it was "essential to create a climate that isolates the Government rather than the strikers from public opinion."

By contrast the far Left has argued that winning the strike through attempting to persuade a passive and uninformed public opinion requires shifting one's arguments to the right. If the key to winning a strike is public opinion, then how do you overcome the bias of the media in reporting or ignoring strikes. The problem is not to prohibit activity because it looks bad on telly, but to spread the struggle so that more people get involved and thereby change their ideas.

In some senses the CPGB, by its pessimism about the role of the media and its bias, sides with the advocates of physical force. It has produced a pamphlet arguing that the media demoralised the strikers and deliberately reflected only the NCB's case. It has produced many examples of censored or rewritten stories such as the hapless Daily Mirror journalist forced to go on early morning radio and television to justify a story under his byline which he had neither seen, let alone written suggesting that the miners were about to hold a ballot.

The CPGB asserts "The serious effort undertaken by the government/NCB to establish the political terms of reference of the dispute was expressed by the priority given to obtaining favourable airtime and newspaper. The media interventions were as meticulously planned as was their policing operations and alternative energy deliveries. Their efforts were well rewarded."

But it is true that the NCB had a strategy with the media. The NUM, by contrast, had none. The NUM faced a major task in turning the terms of debate from the issues of violence and democracy towards the NUM's issues of defining profitability, democratic control of industry, the place of coal in Britain's energy policy, civil liberties and the economic future of the "depressed regions." The NUM's failings in this area are entirely absent from the CPGB pamphlet.

The NUM did little to create the agenda or rebut the daily propaganda from the Coal Board and government. The NUM head office had one press officer, doubling as personal assistant to Arthur Scargill. Inevitably inaccessible, she had to contend with probably over 100 journalists covering the strike each day. The NCB, by contrast, had over 40 press officers. By nine o'clock each morning they had prepared return to work figures — thereby setting the news agenda — and with the aid of the police they had prepared detailed accounts of the day's violence. By mid morning these stories were with the newsmen of the provincial and national press courtesy of the Press Association and local news agencies such as Raymonds.

Although Mr Scargill was often available to make a two minute response to the day's events, normally in an early evening television studio, this was hardly adequate to the task. The NUM had no network or reporting centre to which miners could relay their stories of picket line violence to the newspapers willing to print them. Similarly Mr Scargill would miss the opportunity afforded him at the press conferences after the fortnightly NUM executive in Sheffield. Mr Scargill would typically announce "the strike goes on." After about 15 minutes of parrying questions, he would depart. The NUM leadership did not seem to come to the press conference with any sense of what the union could gain from them.

To take three small examples of missed opportunities. At the outset of the strike the NUM held no briefings or formal press conference at which it could have presented its arguments for the retention of a large coal industry. Campaign leaflets were produced by the union as the overtime ban got underway, but many journalists have spoken to never received them. Similarly Mr Andrew Glyn, an economics lecturer at Oxford University, prepared a detailed exposition for the NUM, using computer extrapolations, to show that, using wider social and economic criteria, Britain did not have any uncompetitive pits. Again no press conference was held to launch his research. Copies of Mr Glyn's paper dribbled out.

Finally five academic accountants prepared a detailed article arguing that the NCB's accounting methods were insufficient to determine whether individual pits were profitable. Mr Scargill knew of the article since he was quoted in the magazine that originally carried the article praising the academics' work. But again the NUM held no press conference. The story — and the row over the NCB's attempts to suppress the article — dribbled out through a third party.

Quite early in the dispute members of the Industrial and Labour Correspondents' group went up to Sheffield to talk with the NUM about the union's strained relations with Fleet Street. It was suggested that the National Union of Journalists might second one of its members to help staff the union's press office (although the Durham area did so). Nothing came of the offer. The NUM argued that it had put out numerous press releases and they had been ignored. Doubtless changes in the union's image would have been at the margin if the offer had been taken up; but for the moment blame must rest with both sides.

When publishers come out to play

Colin Shearman reports on a boom in drama publishing

PRAVDA, the play by David Hare and Howard Brenton now showing at the National Theatre, has made its debut in print. It's a publication which means that Methuen now have 500 paperback plays in print — that's three times as many as ten years ago. Their main rivals, Faber and Penguin, have a similarly optimistic, if less dramatic, tale to tell.

Since play-texts are bought predominantly by young people, perhaps this unprecedented boom in sales is not so surprising. After all, the theatre has proved itself since the 70s to be the medium most in touch with contemporary problems. Three plays about the Falklands, for instance, appeared very quickly after the Task Force first set sail — one of them while the war was still on. And for a generation brought up on television there's a great attraction in

books which can be read at one sitting without having to wade through endless descriptive passages. But that doesn't explain, of course, why this particular publishing bonanza should be happening now rather than, say, ten years ago. One simple explanation is an increase in student drama courses. Why else should sales of Harold Pinter's The Caretaker suddenly rocket almost into five figures every September? But more importantly, economic circumstances over the decade seem to have forced publishers to come up with new ideas.

"I suppose in the past we'd been a bit lazy, quite honestly, just putting out the texts of established authors six months after the play opened," says Nick Hornby, drama editor of Methuen. "But I think the cut-backs of the mid-70s then forced all of us to be more adventurous and start looking for new modes of distribution and presentation."

Of all the projects developed across the industry there's been a highly effective search for new outlets, very cheap basic imprints, competitions to find new writers — the most surprisingly successful has probably been Methuen's own scheme with the Royal Court to print pre-publication texts as part of the theatre programme for just £1.

"We found out by experiment that if you present a copy of the play to the audience on the night, sales go up astronomically," says Hornby. "Regardless of the size of the house, 25 per cent of the audience will always buy the text." As a result, the Court can sell as many in a six week run as we would normally sell in a year over the whole world.

Traditionally, drama publishing has always been a tricky area because the usual commissioning criteria don't apply. "The books themselves are never reviewed so you have to rely on publicity generated by the play itself. It has to be national publicity and that, unfortunately, still means 'London run' says Frank Pike of Faber. At the same time, however, a well received show will not automatically end up between soft covers. Alan Bleasdale's Having a Ball, which some might consider a prime candidate for the bookshops — a successful London season, constantly touring and by an

author with a high national profile has been turned down by every major drama publisher because the way it looks on the page.

Says Pike: "As a farce, it's largely stage directions, which don't make a particularly good read."

Anxious to be more involved at the early stages, however, Methuen have recently agreed with the Women's Playhouse Trust to put up half the money to commission new plays from six writers — including Louise Page, Sarah Daniels and Clare Luchman — in return for a share of the box office. "At £1,500 each, it's unlikely we'll get our money back from publishing alone, not within the decade anyway," says Hornby. "But you never know your luck. 'The hope is that if one of them really takes off then it can to some extent subsidise the others.'"

'A woman who is enjoying her labour,' says Earth Mother Sheila Kitzinger, 'swings into the rhythms of contractions as if her birth-giving were a powerful dance.'



Polly Toynbee

AS Sheila Kitzinger put down the tray of vegetarian food, she pointed out that the kidney-shaped low table was in fact a birthing stool. "A carpenter in the next village makes them up for me. My women often take them into hospital with them. Makes a lovely coffee table afterwards," she said with a grin.

For she is the Earth Mother, or Birth Mother, of the nation. Her Good Birth Guide has obstetricians up and down the land quaking. If Britain is now one of the most progressive countries in obstetric practice, it is largely due to her.

She has just written a sex book, which has become a best seller, the way respectable sex books do. It is full of photographs and drawings that induce the involuntary guffaw — like the picture of the blissful naked young mother breast feeding twins while embracing her naked husband.

But that is a sideshow. Natural childbirth is what she is famous for and she has written no less than 16 influential books on the subject. Her work started at the same time as the National Childbirth Trust was set up. She is still a tutor for NCT, and gives private lessons in her manor house outside Oxford to pregnant women with particular problems.

She sat on a pile of cushions, her hair in a big blond bun, her voluminous figure dressed in a turquoise track suit, her hands expressive, her gestures expansive. She exudes warmth and geniality.

She is a marvellous talker, with a rarer gift for listening. But she, like her friend and ally, the French obstetrician, Michel Odent, does say some most extraordinary things. "Birth is ecstasy," she says, beaming. "That moment when the perineum is stretched to its utmost — that ring of fire as the baby is born, yes ecstasy!" She gestures graphically. "It is a sexual pleasure."

What about pain? "Ah, but pain and pleasure are so very close," she said.

She has had five children, all born at home at a time when few were. She had no particular theories about it then. "I didn't trust hospitals," she says. From that first instinct springs most of the rest of her ideas. Even when she was pregnant with twins she wouldn't go near the hospital. She waited until she was in labour, and rang the shocked local midwife at the last moment.

"My husband filmed my last baby being born. He said 'Smile, and I did. I reached down and caught her, while my husband kept on filming. I didn't want to put my head in the way of the camera, so the baby crept out by herself. Babies have this creeping reflex. They naturally crawl up on to their mother's bodies. They don't need to be delivered, they deliver themselves. Jenny was 15 when I showed her the film. She thought it was very beautiful and she just said 'Thank you.'"

The trouble with what she says in her writings that this is how it "ought" to be — though, of course, she keeps saying that women should do their own thing. Squatting and yelling and delivering in baths may suit some, but others are very grateful for a good old hospital bed, a machine that shows how the baby is doing, a reassuring doctor and a needle-full of pain relief to take the pain away.

That is my "thing," and there is now some danger of it becoming more difficult to get. Natural childbirth is taking such a grip on our hospitals that what I had a baby four months ago could not be an epidural, or a shot of pethidine, nor even a gasp of air. (If we're not careful,

the cut-throat Health Minister will take the natural birthers at their word, and start closing the maternity hospitals down altogether and sending women home.)

But birth to Sheila Kitzinger is in itself an experience of such overriding importance that reading her books must leave most women wondering what they are missing.

A life-enhancing personal experience in which they can feel in touch with their own feelings and give glad expression to the energy sweeping through their bodies," she writes in her latest book. "A woman who is enjoying her labour swings into the rhythms of contractions as if her birth-giving were a powerful dance."

Natural childbirth can become a new ritual, a new dogma. This is what NCT

founder Prunella Brance says in her Childbirth with Confidence (1982): "Expectant mothers should realise how important it is to learn to accomplish the birth of a baby. One cannot expect any theory to work if one obeys the rules."

The NCT now tutors 20,000 expectant mothers a year — and thousands more go to a somewhat different school from Prunella Brance though they both work under the same umbrella. The NCT preaches exercise and breathing, while Kitzinger advocates a wilder, back-to-nature spontaneity. Yet the theory behind the techniques is much the same: Mother

Nature knows best, except in a few dire emergencies. Leave it to her, whatever wonders modern science may dream up.

All these thousands of women are being taught to regard intervention, and drugs in particular, as the malevolent inventions of evil (male) obstetricians. They are taught that Nature is best. The history of mankind has been one long struggle against the violence Nature does to us, but in certain situations we are invited to sentimentalise it: "full of natural goodness" on the packet helps to sell it.

The image of the healthy "natural" peasant woman squatting behind the bush joyfully giving birth like shelling peas is hardly the truth — ask any Third World gynaecologist. If she's back in the fields hours later, that's what sustains her, living forces on her, and many women and babies are

crippled and die. Those who romanticise such births are no better than Marie Antoinette playing at milk maids.

What's more, for the first-time pregnant women these classes can be misleading. They draw up their birth plans and box themselves into a strong commitment to use no drugs. They persuade themselves that drugs will seriously damage their babies and spoil this mystical experience. They tell their husbands not to allow anyone near them with anything unnatural. They have lain on the floor in their classes, panting and puffing their way through imaginary births, "controlling the pain". Which is all very well for as long as the pain remains imaginary.

When labour starts many are shocked. No one told them how much it would hurt and how useless all that huffing and puffing. They emerge from the delivery room sheepish "failures" who have not "controlled the pain", have not stuck to their birth plans, may even have shouted for drugs.

They have probably not experienced the joys that Sheila Kitzinger talks of. I have met plenty of women who have described blissful births, in which they smiled through it all and watched the birth in wonder — but they had all had epidurals.

Women are not getting there, reports Geraldine Hackett

How to derail a career

BRITISH Rail has been warned that it should reform its recruitment and employment practices if it wants to avoid being taken to court for discriminating against women.

An unpublished study financed by the Equal Opportunity Commission records prejudice among managers, promotion structures that work against women and an industry that stubbornly remains a man's world.

In March last year, when the research was carried out, 93 per cent of the staff keeping the trains running were men. Few trains are driven by women. Out of the 21,500 staff in driving grades, there are two women relief drivers and five drivers' assistants. The only woman ever to make it to the qualified driver grade was a man who had had a sex change.

More women are being recruited as guards but there are still only 59 women, compared with 3,908 men. At management level, women are still a minority. There are two women in senior management and a total of 171 in management jobs, compared with 7,868 men.

Women are mainly to be found in clerical, secretarial and cleaning jobs.

Researcher Diana Robbins of Goldsmiths' College in London found evidence of direct discrimination — a vacancy notice for a train driver asked staff for nominations "from sons and brothers."

But perhaps the greatest barrier women face is the attitudes of managers. Diana Robbins interviewed 30 managers and found that none thought all railway jobs were equally suitable for women.

Her report says: "A surprising number of BR managers were prepared to agree that prejudicial attitudes to women were part of BR tradition."

One manager told her women as traction trainees (the promotion line to driver) were a "bloody nuisance." Another said he always made a point of finding out from women what their family circumstances were: "It's just out of general interest, because we want people to come to work," he said.

Such views weren't confined to managers. An official of the British Transport Officers' Guild, the union which represents management grades, said: "The job's got to be done, not half done. That's the issue. To want to be facetious, we can't get to the situation where the train is standing out there because the station supervisor's feeding the baby."

Within BR the ideal of the railway family still lingers, albeit tempered in recent years by drastic reductions in staff levels. The basic structure for blue-collar workers is one of recruiting staff young into the lowest grades and promoting in line with length of service. The seniority principle is still strong and favoured by the trade unions.

The age limits are likely to discriminate indirectly against women. BR won't train anyone aged over 23 to be a driver for more than 5 feet 4 inches tall. Progress to driver is strictly dependent on the seniority queue. The graduate recruit-

ment scheme for management jobs has an upper limit of 28. Women who leave the railway while their children are young lose their place in the promotion line. Any break longer than the statutory maternity leave means women have to start right back at the bottom of the queue. Managers tended to explain the absence of women from certain jobs by saying such jobs were heavy or dirty or required working hours that would breach the factory acts.

Yet one of the dirtiest and heaviest jobs in BR is done overwhelmingly by women working night shifts — the 1861 women employed as railmen (sic) who are carriage cleaners.

The report says: "The work is heavy, dirty and can be dangerous, yet apparently despised by the very kind of men who believe women are incapable of heavy work." BR has obtained a dispensation from the factory acts to employ women as carriage cleaners. They work in large unheated sheds or on the line. The women complained to Ms Robbins of old or inadequate equipment and a pecking order that left them very much at the bottom.

One said: "It's a shame that they treat us like pigs down here. It's a funny place. You can't explain — you should come down here."

Male workers are demoted to carriage cleaning for offences such as drunken driving. "At one depot, half the men cleaning carriages were there for disciplinary reasons," says the report.

One cleaner described the work: "You have to climb up with heavy buckets of water and treat us like pigs down here. It's a funny place. You can't explain — you should come down here."

The prospects for increasing the number of women in all jobs on the railways are limited at a time when BR is recruiting about 10,000 staff a year because of natural wastage.

The report recommends the setting up of an equal opportunity committee with real power and status. The final chapter says: "Indications of prejudice, of harassment, of unfair treatment, of conscious and unconscious acts of injustice, of illegal discrimination — both direct and indirect — appear throughout the report. Action is needed now."

A legal commentary, prepared as an appendix to the report, suggests BR is vulnerable to legal action for direct and indirect discrimination because of its current practices.

The study project was agreed between BR and the City University and the EOC approached for funding. It was not carried out under the EOC's formal powers of investigation.

A spokesman for BR's industrial relations department said BR would act on the report's recommendations. He could not comment on its contents as the report had been intended to be confidential.



Sheila Kitzinger: "Birth is ecstasy." (Picture by Martin Argyle)

Vanity Fair

AT LAST a new and clearly defined role for Urbleton Council has emerged. It's to be an Employment Agency, scouring the Private Sector for workers and thrusting contracts upon them.

Following the recent enormous successes of privatisation (as in Hospital Cleaning and Bus Routes) Government has sent Proposals to Our Council suggesting that they put the lot out to tender — maintenance of parks and vehicles, refuse disposal, meals-on-wheels and such like, because that's how they do it in America.

Not that Our Leader is a sycophantic copy-cat, but when she sees perfection, as she recently did in the New World, she wishes, quite naturally, to emulate it. That is her Goal. So if Our Council don't do their very best to fix up the Private Sector and still manage to wangle jobs for their own workforce, then up will pop Secretary of State and make them tender out the work all over again. He has the Power.

He'll also be wanting to see annual accounts and reports and an assessment of current costs and Private costs and comparison of both, all results "to be made known to the public" and Himself.

What with the cost of accounting, reporting and establishing costs, and 10-15 per cent added to the cost by tendering out, council might think they could save the money by doing the work themselves, but Our Government knows that all council workers are sluggish creatures and can only be goaded into activity by the lash of competition and adversity.

It might seem unfair that council Workforces, being stuck in one place, will have to sell their equipment and go on paying to maintain empty depots if they lose contracts, but as this is a country of Sportsmen and the no good bearing a grudge, they will always lend everything to the

Private Firm that undercut them. Such sacrifice of the self to the common good is bound to bring rewards of some sort. And they aren't alone in their suffering. In Capitalist Castleton it's been a struggle even for the Private Sector.

They've tried meals-on-wheels, the Chill-cook method (freeze for seven days then heat up) but it was a bit of a failure, especially for chips and rhubarb crumble. The crumble went into a nasty sog. "It wasn't sensitive enough for the elderly," said a Spokesman.

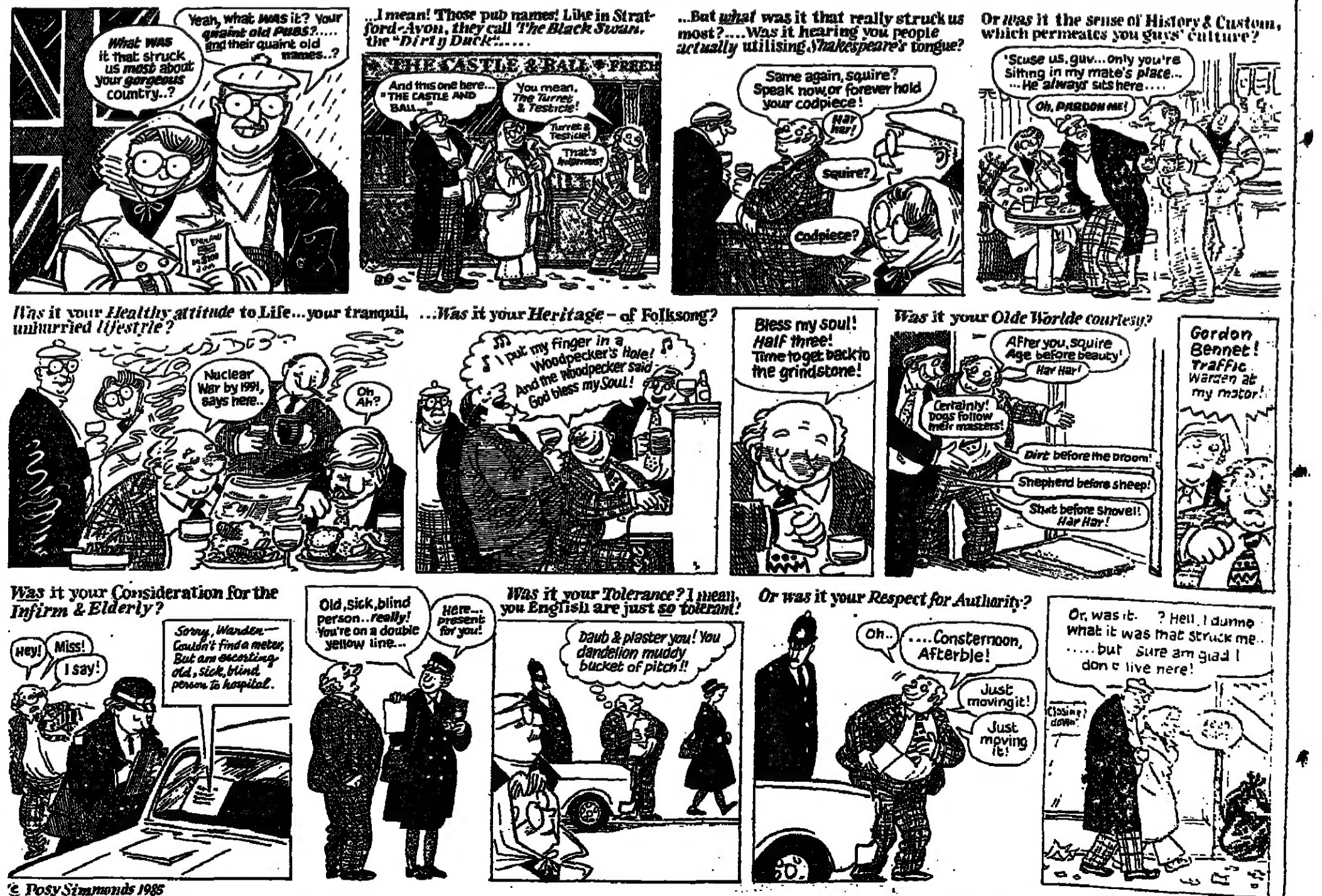
That was bad luck. Then they tried Garden Maintenance but it was a very wet April. More bad luck. They tried Street Cleaning in the Autumn but hadn't counted on the "extra problem of falling leaves" — and a flagrant deposit of litter.

Castleton Council being rather cheered off with them by this time, Private Sector sacked everyone (because snappy dismissal is the only way to discipline workers) and swore blind that they had "every intention of continuing to strive to achieve success". They managed 33-69 per cent cleanliness in residential streets.

And as Capitalist Boroughs are, in the main, deeply efficient, Castleton Council did a quick audit check on contracting invoices and found that 12 per cent were for work that had never been done. They quickly put that right by employing One Scrutiniser, which added 12 per cent to the cost, but these are all "teething problems". Urbleton Council, like Castleton, must just press on.

Because although these are only Private Green Paper legislation shall be out by the end of the year. Government thought they might as well say so. They know they can't lose, and if Our Council finds its new role rather taxing, there'll be plenty of Private Employment Agencies to help it out.

Michele Hanson



Promised reform lacks political rateable value

Today, groaning inwardly, a handful of senior ministers sit down to examine a jagged self-inflicted wound. They have strict instructions from the head nurse: she wants the bleeding stopped for ever and at the double. She has, in fact, given her word that there won't be a trace of blood or sign of a scar by the end of the year. Meanwhile, unhappily, there is gore all over the carpet.

Sometimes, before you get to the core of an internally detailed subject, it is sensible to pause and ask why you are getting into it at all. Why, specifically, has Mrs. Thatcher first landed her exhausted environment team and Cabinet with the urgent task of abolishing rates as we know them, and then of saying what will come after? The root answer, alas, lies in the Prime Minister's hallowed propensity for giving off-the-cuff pledges that must then, somehow, be turned into reality. She had promised to do something definite about the rates before the Tories won power in 1979. In the first term it was rate-capping and metropolitan county abolition. Now she is off again. It doesn't make much political sense. With the clock ticking towards the next election, any canny politician would do what canny politicians have been doing for decades: disappearing into the undergrowth. But Mrs. Thatcher's stance and sacred words allow no such options. Ministers are therefore doomed today to begin a long patrol through the possibilities charted exhaustively in past reports (like the admirable Layfield) and more recent green papers. But why? There are plenty of bad things to be said about rates. They raise hackles. Only 13 million people pay them in full. And there is much perceived unfairness. Why should one old lady living alone pay as much as the house next door with four earners?

Yet for every grumble there is also something to be said for rates. They are cheap and efficient to collect. The little old lady is consuming more of the housing stock than she needs; and one day the home next door will split up, buy houses of their own and pay rates. Of course it is desirable that local democracy blossoms, but there's absolutely no guarantee that any of the predicted reforms will make it better. And, above all, you have to set the political context.

One reason why rates are so unpopular is that Mrs. Thatcher has devoted so many of her waking hours to denouncing them. There is cause and effect here. Another reason is the Conservative Treasury's bizarrely contradictory policy of hacking great slices from existing rate support grants; first identifying an unpopular tax and then deliberately making it more unpopular. But the biggest hole in the argument emerges when you set what has been achieved over the last six years against the proposed agenda for the next six months. If you replace rates by a more broadly based tax — a local income tax (the Layfield route) or a modified poll tax (the current favourite) — you seek efficiency by accountability; you endeavour to create a system of local government finance which commands support because it is what people have voted for, and will vote against if they dislike the way their money is being spent. In short, logically and explicitly, the purpose of reforming rates is to hand power back to local electors. But wait a minute. So far the Government has proceeded exactly contrarywise, stripping away local power, setting arbitrary spending limits, handing control back to Whitehall or unelected boards. Real reform of local government finance must be centralising. But we have had six years of centralisation. What happens next, in the old language of politics, may thus be called a U-turn. More benevolently perhaps, it looks like the desperate thrashing of a government which doesn't know what to do, and wouldn't have started from here if only the lady had kept her mouth shut.

Sober attitude to Russian drinking

Look up the word "teetotal" in an English-Russian dictionary and you are likely to find a tongue-twisting circumlocution for a concept which may be as alien to the language as to the vast majority of those who speak it. In ours we found (approximately transliterated) *prinadlezhashchi k soshchestvu trezosti*, which, we are advised by those who ought to know, means something like "inclined towards an existence of sobriety." This may help to explain why there does not appear to be much of it about in the Soviet Union and why, in turn, the new regime under Mr. Gorbachev has decided to try to tackle Russia's mammoth drinking problem. Before we consider this crippling social phenomenon, it is only fair to point out that we in the West have no ground for smugness in this area. Nearly all western countries have problems arising from alcoholism and excessive consumption, and to these we must add drug addiction from which the Russians do not seem to suffer in anything like the same degree.

We can also set aside all the weary clichés about the tedium of the Soviet system, the climate, the lack of amusements and consumer goods and the pressure to conform or else. The existence of severe alcohol crises in such disparate places as Scandinavia and France, where there are few such problems, suggests these factors are marginal. Those who have been to Russia may observe that it is not the amount that is drunk but rather what is drunk and how it is consumed that bring us closer to defining the problem.

In Russia one does not have a drink: one opens a bottle. Once it is open it seems a matter of honour, of domestic tidiness and/or machismo to empty it. It usually contains vodka (which, treacherously means "little water") or some other spirit, and the purpose of the exercise seems to be to attain oblivion as quickly as possible. Anyone who has experienced Russian hospitality, a manifestation without parallel in human affairs, will recall, probably with regret, the endless toasts — and that it is bad manners not to drain the glass of vodka each time one is called upon to drink to undying friendship between our peoples, or peace, or the prosperity of the local farming cooperative. The Russians are binge drinkers par excellence: they do it with spirits and too many of them tend to join their binges together until the roubles run out.

Mr. Gorbachev is wise not to tackle the problem by rationing, pushing up the price or prohibition, all of which have been tried in Russia before, to the abiding benefit of *samogon* (moonshine) producers of bathtub vodka who ensure that the cure is worse than the disease. There is no quick and easy solution; and if there were and it was applied with effect, there would be a very large hole in the treasury of a state which not only reaps vast tax harvests from a social problem which is centuries old, but also makes and sells the stuff. The ill-starred attempt to get the genie back into the vodka bottle could leave Mr. Gorbachev looking like a Marxist-Leninist Canute, helpless against the relentlessly rising tide of little water. But we may wish him luck, even if it seems highly inappropriate to drink to his success.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A class-war approach the SDP can do without

Sir,—It would be unfortunate if my former parliamentary colleague, Neville Sandelson (Letters, May 16) was thought to be speaking for anyone but himself in his extraordinary outburst on behalf of those Labour councillors who prefer to maintain Tory rule in the shires rather than work with the Alliance for good local government.

He suggests that such arrangements would be viewed with distaste by the electorate. The evidence is to the contrary. There is every reason to believe that most ordinary people are heartily sick of the politics of hate, customarily the prerogative of the far Left and far Right.

Sadly, Mr. Sandelson joins them, with others like Neil Kinnock who also proclaims that never the twain shall meet, albeit for expedient reasons in his case. It is ironic that Mr. Sandelson's letter appeared on the very day that an opinion poll showed

the Alliance occupying the middle ground more firmly than ever.

Coalitions and pacts are part of the democratic process for anyone. Of course Social Democrats want no truck with the loony Left. If, though, Mr. Sandelson spoke with equal condemnation about cohabitation with the Tories, his argument might carry some conviction.

Has he forgotten four million unemployed? His class-war politics are remarkably one-sided. As it is, his approach should be seen as just one more sorry version of the bitter, impractical, hold-the-line, extremist approach which drove so many of us from the Labour Party.

We can do without it in the SDP. John Grant, Bromley, Kent.

Sir,—As one of those rare breeds in the SDP nowadays who still considers many of

his values and aspirations to be basically socialist, I write to take issue with Neville Sandelson's unsubstantiated claim that the "SDP is by its very nature and composition an antisocialist party."

No matter how we seek to relate modern social democracy to "one nation" Toryism, its historical roots are deeply embedded in the socialist tradition and are alien to all forms of conservatism — wet and dry.

I fully understand and share Neville Sandelson's disdain for the present Labour Party. Some of us had the good sense never to join it in the first place. The Labour Party has consistently patronised the working classes and its very existence is parasitically dependent on the maintenance of class divisions.

But Mr. Sandelson does a disservice to other forms of socialist traditions by equating all socialism with the Labour Party form. Many of us in the SDP, while not wish-

ing to make socialism the standard philosophy in the party, would seek to argue that we should emulate the radical socialist approaches of European social democrats such as Sweden.

There is a firm commitment to welfare provision alongside a low rate of inflation; there experiments in workers' ownership are being created without daily affecting employment. Please, please, please, don't throw your baby out with your bath water. Yours faithfully, Brian Stone, 51 Oak Grove, London NW2.

Sir,—If, as Neville Sandelson asserts, the SDP is by its very nature and composition an antisocialist party, and if, as one would reasonably assume, a democratic party has a fundamental duty not to mislead the electorate, it is evidently time for it to find a new name.

That deals with the SDP. As for the D, apart from the above, we will judge that by its willingness to reflect the anti-Thatcher majority at the next election and, with its partners in the Alliance, to take the tactical ground which a government could be formed? (David Steel, Guardian, March 16). If there is no evidence of the D either, there will assuredly no longer be a P. — Yours faithfully, Graeme O'Reilly, 62 Clementina Road, London E10.

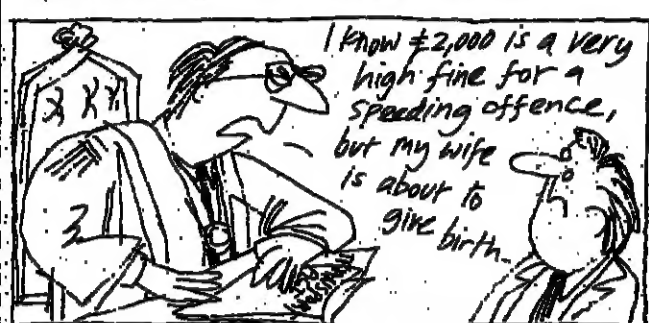
Sir,—Martin Linton and Ian Aiken refer (May 11) to the 1929 Bacon and Radnor result as being "the most cliff-hanging result in electoral history" when the three main parties each won 33 per cent of the vote: Labour 33.7 per cent, Conservative 33.2 per cent and Liberal 33.0 per cent. Surely this distinction belongs to the 1945 Calthness and Sutherland result when

the voting was Conservative 5.564 (33.5 per cent), Labour 5.538 (33.4 per cent) and Liberal 5.503 (33.1 per cent)? — Yours sincerely, (Lord) Pansosky of Shoubridge, House of Lords.

Sir,—The claim (Guardian, May 15) that Bristol is "controlled by a Labour-Liberal coalition" is simply not true. Longstanding Labour control in Bristol was succeeded during 1983-84 by minority Conservative administration with an overall majority on each council committee. Since June 1984 there has been minority Labour control with no overall majority on committees. The distinction is important.

Each party has ploughed its own independent furrow, and the one attempt to arrange a coalition, between Conservatives and Liberals, collapsed in ruins on May 14. — Yours sincerely, George Mickelwright, Bristol Labour Group.

A chaotic traffic jam that is bemusing our magistrates



Sir,—The news that the Magistrates' Association is once again advising its members on a scale of fines emphasises the chaos of the road traffic penalty system. Many penalties have shot up to £2,000. Fines to stop after an accident now have a maximum penalty of £1,000 compared with the previously recommended £125. And the maximum for speeding is £200 compared with £25 a mile in the association's circular.

The Magistrates' Courts Act, 1980; the Criminal Justice Act, 1977 and 1982; the Transport Act of 1980 and 1982; the Road Traffic Act of 1972 and 1974; and sundry orders have all had a go at fixing penalties. I am cynically convinced that much of the drafting is done by different departments which are not on speaking terms with one another. Oh,

yes! There's also the Road Traffic Act, 1984, one of those quaintly described consolidation Acts which never consolidate.

As a result of this proliferation, a number of magistrates' benches and their hapless clerks are quite bemused.

The fixed-penalty system for Scotland is now in force and, after much prodding of the Department of Transport, I learned that it is to come into force in England and Wales in 1986. But we are told that the recommendations are not intended to act as a tariff. I would find this much easier to accept if some realism was used to clarify the question of maximum fines, which are hardly ever imposed. — Yours faithfully, W. F. Shepherd, 4 Asher Road, Langdon Green, Kent.

Fund of past experiences

Sir,—I am writing to you as chairman of the trustees of the Bradford disaster appeal which has now been formally constituted and in respect of which the public response is overwhelming. In the past criticisms have been made of certain disaster appeals, and my co-trustees and I are anxious to learn from their experience.

We would be very grateful if anyone concerned with a disaster fund appeal or anyone who felt that such a fund had not been operated to the best advantage would write to me giving full details which we shall keep in confidence. We wish to learn and learn quickly. — Yours faithfully, Roger W. Suddards, Bradford, W. Yorkshire.

Shunting on the wrong tracks

Sir,—Excessive decentralisation may well be a problem in Yugoslavia, but as a long-time enthusiast for Yugoslavia and for railways I am not quite sure that the railway should be written to Mr. Petrović's story (May 15) of a train travelling through that country changing locomotives five times in five different republics.

The route from Greece to Austria or Italy passes through only four: Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia. Might not changes of locomotive have less to do

with decentralisation run mad than with normal continental railway practice? International trains often have coaches added or removed at the junctions and it may then be convenient to change locomotives.

For what it's worth, travellers on the 7.30 a.m. Aberdeen-Penrith service are puzzled by four different locomotives: nothing to do with Scottish or Cornish nationalism, though. Patrick Goldring, N Walsham, Norfolk.

Tipping the balance back towards coal

Sir,—I would not like readers of your generally sympathetic Leader (May 16) on the Coalfield Communities Campaign to get the idea that we are not desperately concerned about pit closures.

I had no sooner returned to Barnsley from the national launch of the campaign in London than I was confronted with the news that the local Darfield Main colliery, which none of our investigations had suspected to be remotely at risk, was to shut down. But when we add to the grim roll call of Bates and Horden, Bedwas and South Celynen,

Polezmet and Polmaise, one of the aims of our campaign is to get the NCB to develop a really aggressive marketing strategy to persuade people that coal is not only an economic fuel but also a very good one. With such an approach as part of a coherent energy policy, and with some recognition of the social costs of closures, we might begin to see that the Government and the NCB want to avoid a new upsurge of unrest in the coalfields.

All the local authorities in the campaign have strategies to create new jobs. But when we have a new business start up on the same day that a pit closes, it is a case of a few steps forward and a thousand back. — Yours faithfully, (Cliff) Redley Salt, Coalfield Communities Campaign, Barnsley, S. Yorkshire.

Sir,—Your Leader criticises the NUM for not supporting the Coalfield Communities Campaign. But at the Yorkshire area launch of the CCC in Barnsley, May 11, Yorkshire NUM president shared a platform with the Bishop of Wakefield and the chairman of the local chamber of commerce.

Indeed, many of the objections which your Leader refers to as just "old-fashioned realism" were expressed by the NUM during the course of the strike. But at the time the media were too obsessed with the daily games of "pickets and policemen" return-to-work scores, and Scargill's insistence to give much space to non-sensational issues such as an integrated energy policy, or calculating the social costs of pit closures.

The Coalfield Communities Campaign, you say, is a year too late. No, it is yourselves who are a year too late in waking up to the real issues and choices which lay behind the events and passions of the strike. — Yours, Marina Lewycka, Castleford, W. Yorkshire.

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Lacuna

Sir,—The Guardian and other national newspapers have been carrying advertisements for the musical revue Look to the Rainbow at the Apollo Theatre. Among the pieces included in the programme is a song called "The Third World". The Guardian review for the original production at the King's Head Theatre which I wrote, it says, "An over-the-moon occasion."

These five words have been taken out of context and given the impression that the review was highly favourable, when in fact it was not. The complete sentence from which these words were extracted reads: "For examples on the old American musical tradition, this will all be an over-the-moon occasion."

This example, far from being among the worst, is typical of the unfair or misleading way that some theatre producers sometimes make use of theatre reviews. There was even an occasion recently when a critic suggested that a play's design led one to expect a masterpiece, and around the last two words used in an advertisement.

The Drama Section of the Critics' Circle has now compiled a code of practice for the Society of West End producers, fringe and repertory companies. It outlines the ways in which we feel reviews can be used for advertising purposes.

We hope that once it has been considered by the theatre producers, it will be accepted and adhered to. If it is not, we may take other action. — Yours sincerely, Nicholas de Jongh, The Critics' Circle, London SE1.

Why aid can help a little but hinder a lot

Sir,—Stuart Holland (Letters, May 13) has done nothing to detract from Richard Gott's depiction of Labour's Third World development industrialists as a collection of humbugs. There is no generalised wisdom which the public response to famine in Africa and the possibilities of finding a solution to Third World problems in general.

Aid can alleviate a little, but it cannot even help to transform the Third World. Significantly, for one thing, the capacity to absorb it is limited by lack of skilled labour.

Dame Judith Hart must know that when she was Minister for Overseas Development she told the Indian government that Britain would cut its aid allocation unless more of it was used. A Western diplomat told me in New Delhi that when India accepted a foreign aid project, the ambassador concerned would send a triumphant telegram to his ministry.

The Labour group emphasised the need for irrigation, but then we have the Bengali tenant who said: "If they bring me water, the landlord will take my plot from me." In spite of the tenancy laws.

Among the Hausas of Nigeria farmyard droppings are routinely swept from the plots of the poorest to those of the less poor, who have higher status. This exemplifies the Third World's devious cultural problems, which the development industry chooses to ignore.

To bypass the Hausa patronage system a European team launched a successful project, which it subsequently recommended to the World Bank. But the bank

refused to fund it because it was not to change society. It could not risk offending village leaders, and preferred to rely on a trickle-down from those at the top.

But, as the bank knows, the trickle-down rarely: the better off get richer, the poorer poorer. Any government that understood, and was genuinely concerned about Third World difficulties, would certainly leave the bank.

One of Mr. Holland's colleagues attributed special wisdom to the Dutch. But the Netherlands, like Britain — Labour and Tory — is a solid supporter of "aid" to Indonesia, which now aims at driving millions of poor smallholders from their land to make farms bigger and more economic. Meanwhile, landless labourers who resort to crime — or are suspected

of it — are being shot without trial. — Yours faithfully, Brian May, National Liberal Club, London SW1.

Sir,—In answer to Stuart Holland's letter of May 13, may I say that although Cathy Watson and I argue for "withdrawing from the World Bank," we do not argue for "ending aid" and least of all for denying it to the Sandinistas.

The fact that the Nicaraguan government has got no money out of the World Bank since 1982 and has not tried to get any from the IMF since that institution made a loan to Somoza a few days before his overthrow, is precisely one of the reasons for advocating withdrawal by a future Labour government. Teresa Hayler, 6 Boulter Street, Oxford.

A COUNTRY DIARY

KESWICK: It is possible to live in these fells for a lifetime thinking that you know every hill and fold of land, each barn and farm even in ruins, and be proved wrong. I came on a very small old house on a shining May morning. It was tucked on to and concealed by a newer sound barn whose three doors open only on to cobble floors — and ancient muck. The roof of the house and its first floor are mainly fallen, but to judge from what remains this was no ordinary house. Its four small, south-facing windows are eyes, and there are stone mullions and there is nothing to stop shafts of sunlight falling into what was once its kitchen and picking out the dark cavity of a

bread-oven, heated with wood or peat before the baking began. Its round back juts from the outer wall, a cramped dairy-pantry beyond it faces north having stumps of beams — which held shelves above a cooling-slab still on its stone pillars. A massive stone on the north wall, leading only to space, and its stone steps lean drunkenly. No one will climb it again. Some places, even in age and ruin, keep their feeling of past contentment as this one does. Swallows are back in its eaves, sheep and lambs rest in its garb under old bare ash trees and its spring still runs green under cresses. I shall not rest until I know its story. ENID J. WILSON.

A subpostmaster sublime in the dog days of a Raj



Geoffrey Taylor

TOWARDS the end of the winter I spent a month in charge of a country post office. The duties were not excessive, although people did come in from time to time. With upwards of 25 households dotted around it would be remarkable if they had not.

What punctuated every day, though, was the arrival in mid-morning of dispatches from postal headquarters. Sometimes they were marked "immediate," in which case they might need to be attended to. It began to emerge from these messages that there is more to the administration of the Post Office than was apparent from where I stood.

Indeed despite all the films we have been watching, it is clear that the last days

of the Raj have still to be accomplished. Sir Ron Dearing should wear plumes and a tricorn hat. As Post Office chairman he should ride to Mount Pleasant on an elephant.

Unfortunately there are limits to what can be revealed from his side of the counter, and some risks in saying anything at all.

I have no wish to use these observations for an attack on the Official Secrets Act. There is no scarcity of volunteers for that. The fact remains, though, that having acknowledged its provisions in writing on assuming office, one is constrained as much in honour as in law from rushing into print with every detail. The more sensitive matters attending the sale of a premium bond, the niceties of the cash book: these must remain confidential between the vicar and myself.

It is on public record, however, that under Sir Ron there is a governing board, and under the board a central body of senior officials supervising the many branches of this large, meticulous and, on the whole, benign administration. Up in the hinterland are the provinces, each with its governor, styled the Head Postmaster, and a retinue of his own.

In my experience a Head Postmaster does not personally issue the manifold orders of the day which flow

from his office. No single mind could comprehend all that information. Nothing is right and proper that we should be for the hand upon the date-stamp rules the till.

It is no light matter, as I shall show, to attain to an assistant subpostmastership. But let there be no mistake. In the scheme of things we stand to the Head Postmaster as the puma-wallah stood to the chief magistrate of Chandrapore. That is in no sense a complaint. It is mere sociological analysis.

What then are the qualifications? Total integrity. A genius for filling in forms, day-books, ledgers, and quarterly returns. An unwillingness to breach Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act. But there is more.

When my wife, who holds the substantive post, appointed me as her assistant, she signed the following declaration: "To the Head Postmaster."

"Submitted."

"I have selected the person named overleaf to fill this situation. I have satisfied myself that he/she is a British subject, that his/her character is satisfactory, and that he/she is suitable for the duty to be performed. He/she has good hearing in both ears, no defect of speech, no pronounced local dialect, and no indication of nervousness or hysteria such as would render him/her unsuitable for telephone work."

He/she is able to write easily and legibly. I have no reason to doubt that his/her Post Office service is fully stated overleaf. I have not accepted any premium in this case."

Until faced with the challenge, one can be unaware of what is at stake in forms. My tenure during March included the end of the financial year when messages from headquarters take on a more urgent tone.

It had been a difficult year at postal headquarters, as well as a nostalgic one. The half-penny had been abolished in December and the annual returns concerning dog licences had to differentiate between those sold at 37p and those now on special offer at 37p. I was instructed by circular to take "the utmost care" in this compilation and can truthfully say that I did. Without that care the accounts for the year would have been sp over. (It only took half a day.)

Yet in spite of the decorum with which it normally conducts its business, there have been disturbing signs of late that the Post Office is going downmarket, much as the Church of England did when it redeveloped the site of the old Prayer Book. Even as I write a notice has come in about some appalling publicity deal. Sir Ron has not himself involved in promoting Cadbury's Smash. I

didn't master the Indonesian Customs regulations in order to sell powdered potatoes. We've already got entangled with people who process films, not to mention the Leicester Building Society which, while it may for all I know be a perfectly respectable body, should not be encouraged to bask in the glory of a great national institution.

That, then, is the rough outline. Now it is up to the Attorney-General whether to prosecute. Equally had would be dismissal from office, for the form makes it an offence for anyone "to disclose any information to which he has access owing to his official position." That would presumably include the knowledge, officially acquired, that the place was in my care.

The Raj at its finest can be forgiving as well as stern, and I hope it will be. Dismissal from an unpaid appointment carried on in one's home is a difficult concept to grapple with; rather like a strike of students at the Open University. Even so it would be a mortifying experience, the end of a lifetime's ambition, and an irreparable stain on one's career.

But then again, if we're going to pander to every laughing salesman who comes along hawkering a money-spinner, I'm not so sure.

How Owen's pieties mirror Thatcher's moral certainty

COMMENTARY Ian Aitken



POOR Neil Kinnock probably made a mistake when he launched his hyper-adjectival attack on Dr David Owen last Friday morning. He certainly threw the book at Dr Owen, and the book in question was Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases.

No doubt the attack went down well with the Welsh Labour Party conference, where they appreciate phrase-making for its own sake. It probably went down equally well with large numbers of Labour Party members outside Wales, where the SDP and its leader are understandably regarded as traitors.

But the trouble with Mr Kinnock's momentary lapse of self-discipline — and he has been noticeably more succinct recently — is that it provided Dr Owen with a heaven-sent opportunity to engage in a spot of moral superiority. And that is an activity in which Dr Owen is both practiced and skilled.

Indeed, Mr Kinnock has himself been a regular target of the Owen brand of moral superiority, a fact which may account for the Labour leader's sudden loss of control. Like many a sportsman,

Mr Kinnock is now being penalised for a visible retaliation against persistent but invisible provocation.

For the fact is that Dr Owen has always gone about exuding moral superiority. He did it when he was a young backbencher, condemning the moral turpitude of Harold Wilson hours before accepting a ministerial post from him. He did it even more grandly when, to the stonishment and fury of his older colleagues, he became Foreign Secretary. And he has been doing it on a Wagnerian scale ever since he left the Labour Party to help found the SDP.

Not surprisingly, however, it is the Labour Party which attracts Dr Owen's special scorn, both in public and in private. And there is one category for which he reserves a particularly withering contempt: it consists of those right-wing Labour MPs, who, in Dr Owen's view, first condemned the SDP break-away — and then tamely allowed the Labour left to roll over them.

Far from seeing himself as a defector and the others as loyalists, Dr Owen stands the equation on its head, and condemns those of his old

friends who stayed behind as moral cowards. By some strange process of thought, it is they who are the true defectors, not him.

Of this group, the archetypal figure in Dr Owen's mind is Roy Hattersley. And in truth, Mr Hattersley genuinely is the only survivor of a small group of Labour MPs who entered Parliament in the 1960s and became persistent rebels against the Wilson style of leadership. The rest, including Dr Owen and Professor David Marquand, are safely in the SDP.

In public, Dr Owen occasionally links Denis Healey with this Hattersleyesque brand of moral weakness. But although he has sometimes condemned Mr Healey's willingness to compromise his principles on matters like unilateral nuclear disarmament, he retains a private affection and respect for the tough old campaigner.

Much of the same considerations apply to Mr Callaghan, who gave him the essential boost into senior Cabinet office — a boost which has since enabled him to present himself as a seasoned international states-

man. Without that distinction it is highly unlikely that Dr Owen could have become the leader of his party, such as it is.

Thus Mr Callaghan, perhaps the least moralistic of Labour leaders, has remained immune from Dr Owen's condemnation. In return, Mr Callaghan has scarcely uttered anything which might be interpreted as an attack on Dr Owen.

Apart from this exception, however, the moral indignation of Dr Owen is almost universal in its application. Not since Mr Groucher in BBC radio's antique Toytown series has the word "disgraceful" been uttered so frequently, or with such theatrical conviction.

All this adds up to a fairly unflattering picture of the personality of the leader of the Social Democratic Party, and I must confess that I

find his public persona deeply unattractive. He shares with Mrs Thatcher and certain sections of the Labour left a capacity for hate which most people would recognise as unhealthy.

But one must try to be fair, and it is only fair to add that there are other, more private aspects to Dr Owen's personality which are much more attractive. To the surprise of many people who know his public manner, he is prepared to reveal considerable diffidence about his personal abilities.

In spite of that scowling platform expression, he has a well developed sense of humour, which he frequently exercises at himself. It is often accompanied by a peculiar twisted grin and a sly side-long glance which could be either Laurence Olivier's Richard III, or just a guilty

schoolboy. He can charm both men and women when he wants to. But if this is unexpected, it does not add up to a complex personality. To be sure, he insists that he does not regard politics as the only important thing in life, and declares that he would be happy to go back to medicine if he fails to get the SDP off the ground. But he is absolutely single-minded about politics, at least for the time being.

This single-mindedness has led some people to compare Dr Owen with Mrs Thatcher,

and it is true that both seem to share that indefinable but instantly recognisable quality known as the killer instinct. But that is a quality which all too often manifests itself in a willingness to kill off rivals in one's own party, as both Mr Heath and Mr Roy Jenkins can testify.

Thus by far the most important similarity between Dr Owen and Mrs Thatcher is their unwavering sense of self-righteousness. They share the same absolute conviction that they are not just objectively right but morally right as well. It is a conviction which colours everything they say and do.

Dr Owen clearly hopes that he can emulate Mrs Thatcher's remarkable success as that kind of conviction politician. But he faces one major obstacle: to be a conviction politician, you really do need convictions, with a capital C. And unlike Mrs Thatcher, Dr Owen possesses no simplistic panacea which can be presented to the electorate as the One True Faith.

Now that Thatcherism is beginning to crumble as a convincing programme for restoring economic prosperity it is arguable that a return

to something like the old mishmash may suddenly look rather appealing to a disillusioned electorate. But it is not the kind of policy that a messianic politician like Dr Owen can easily espouse. As the scourge of fudge and muddle, he needs something a little more distinctive and (dare I say it?) uplifting.

He is unlikely to find anything of that kind in the policy committee of the SDP, which (as Bill Rodgers reminded us last week) is still the Gaitskillite Labour Party in exile in spite of Dr Owen. What the produce will look like is similar to the product of Labour's chief economic spokesman — who else but shabby old Roy Hattersley?

Put that way, it hardly seems worth all the fuss. Indeed, Dr Owen acknowledged on television yesterday that his true instinct still lies with what he called the "old Labour Party." The pity of it is that Dr Owen's moral superiority might just be sufficient to condemn this country to yet another year of Thatcher's moral superiority — which helps to excuse Mr Kinnock's adjectival lapse.

"ALL PM on about," said Francis Pym in his room at the Commons, "is trying to persuade her and her government to make some modifications to policy. And for that to be turned into a sort of personal vendetta is ludicrous."

Her is Mrs Thatcher, against whom Mr Pym mounted his rebellion one sudden evening at Oxford last week. It had rained unceasingly for hours. The William Morris wallpaper was peeling off the walls of the Gladstone Room as Mr Pym addressed a crowded meeting of the Law Society at the Oxford Union.

"Wasn't it an awful day?" he said. "Mind you, we needed the rain."

Did he mean it, I asked — having in mind his acres in Bedfordshire, and the constituency of 128 villages he represents in Cambridgeshire — as a farmer? "The garden I was thinking of more."

Well, I said, it had been a passionate speech, hadn't it? He nodded.

But why on earth should Geoffrey Rippon, supposedly one of his supporters in the new Conservative Centre Forward Group, go on television next day saying it was a bad start? To which Mr Pym, whose political disadvantage it is always to see at least two sides to any question, replied that he was sorry about that, but Mr Rippon hadn't liked parts of the speech and had, quite rightly, said so.

What Mr Pym said should have come as no surprise to anyone who knows him at all. The previous time we talked at any length was when he was still Foreign Secretary, and I've never heard any minister talk so freely, on the record, about the style of his Prime Minister. She was grossly over the top and no more, and so on. And his book, *The Politics of Consent*, which was published last year, should have left readers in no doubt where he stood. So what on earth did those people mean, particularly those who knew his own group, who now said he had gone too far?

It was clear, he said, that some people did think that. "But," said he, calling wider support to his own feeling in the great many people outside politics, and a great many people in the country, I think, are of the view that a change would be beneficial, and that's what I'm trying to present. And it seems to me we can't do that in the traditional Conservative way, which is a relaxed way, and try to persuade the government that's about this whole thing is about."

He had himself said of the Tory party that all human life was there? "That's right."

Had he been surprised at opposition to him? Not at all, he said. The group was loosely knit. In the first week everyone wondered what it meant, but

"It's the thinking loyalty that counts". Francis Pym pictured by Martin Argles

A change would be beneficial, and that's what I'm trying to present



Terry Coleman

when it matured and was better understood it would enhance the party's appeal to the electorate, and widen its appeal at the next election.

I had assumed that Mr Pym would at least have talked to Mr Heath about the formation of his group, but he had not.

Not once? "No, it's not appropriate for ex-Prime Ministers, you know. They wouldn't wish, I'm sure, to be included in a group like this."

But he himself was an ex-Foreign Secretary. And surely, since he had worked for Heath as chief whip, and had liked him, and since they must bump into each other in the House...? "To tell the honest truth, it's a good many months now since I've had the chance of a word."

Mr Pym then said Mr Heath had worked not only in Heath's government but also in those of Macmillan, Home,

and Thatcher. Well then, had he just mentioned it to Home or Macmillan, say just over a drink? "Certainly not. This is a collection of Members of Parliament of like mind. We didn't go canvassing people outside."

I took Mr Pym back to June 10, 1983, just after the last election, when Mrs Thatcher called him and said, "Francis, I want a new Foreign Secretary." What had he replied? "Well," he said, "that's it, isn't it? She was entitled to do that. I must have said something, but I can't remember what."

Mightn't it seem to some people now, since he had been dismissed, and since indeed he was so far as I knew the first Foreign Secretary ever to be dismissed, that he was just plain misfired? "That is for me the most painful and untrue criticism I can face. People do

say, 'Oh it's sour grapes.' I enjoyed all the high offices that I held, but equally I am now enjoying not holding them. I am not bitter about it. I have no score to pay off with Mrs Thatcher. I certainly would have preferred it if she'd told me before the election instead of afterwards, but that's a minor matter. But there is no bitterness in me whatever."

This certainly agrees with what was said at Oxford but not reported. The miracles of modern technology are such that when a man makes a speech late in the evening it is, nowadays, generally pre-empted from a text provided by the speaker hours before. Questions and answers are rarely reported. At Oxford, Mr Pym was asked after his speech if it was true that Mrs Thatcher was obstinate and uncaring. He replied Yes and No. On many occasions she was obstinate, and that

was a virtue. But she was not uncaring: he knew her well, and nothing could be further from the truth.

"Thank you for recalling that," that's right. And they were still civil to each other? "Certainly. All ways have been. Wouldn't dream of doing anything else. We've always had a proper, human, civilised relationship."

Since she twice publicly snubbed him in the last election campaign, this is a generous thing for him to say.

In his book published last year, which incidentally in every way foreshadows what he has been saying this last week, Mr Pym placed at the head of each chapter a quotation from Nietzsche, Aristotle, Samuel Johnson, and so on. I was particularly interested in one from Charles de Remusat, an obscure French minister who held office both before and after

the Second Empire. "Ha ha," replied Francis Pym: "I just went through a dictionary of those things."

So much then for the diligence, seeking out of significance. I just picked them out," he said. "That's right. To entertain."

Fair enough, but it's worth recording that what was picked out from de Remusat was this: "Unanimity is almost always an indication of servitude."

Very well; but, thinking of the servitude of Cabinet ministers, I asked Mr Pym if he hadn't said, in terms, that Mrs Thatcher was incapable of believing she might be wrong. "Well, she is someone, certainly, who is less interested in listening to a debate and so on. Her character and her personality and her nature is to be very positive and very sure what she wants, and go for it. That of course has been her

political strength."

And her weakness? "Ah, well, it has not been a weakness. No it has not. Some people now are saying it is beginning to be a weakness, but I emphasise to you that it is absolutely the essence of her character — her determination, her clarity, and so forth."

At one point in his Oxford speech Mr Pym said he did not think his views were any heresy, and then interpolated in the prepared text the words, "No rebel views here." Now, since he was historically minded, did he see the line of Parliamentary Pym stretching back, at least five of them in the direct line having been Members, and stretching back indeed to that rebel John Pym whom Parliament refused to hand over to Charles I for impeachment? "Not to John Pym unfortunately. There may be a collateral connection, but it cannot be proved."

But although Mr Pym's group was to be no party within the party, because that would be the ultimate sin, yes, And pointless, anyhow."

All right, but I asked, waving his speech, though he might say he was no rebel wasn't this in fact rebellious stuff, even qualified as he qualified it? "Well, all right then. ... Criticising the economy is obviously of basic importance. But I regard myself as true to the platform on which I was elected."

In the last paragraph of his speech he said, "We do not feel disloyal," as if he did feel the need to make a defence to an anticipated attack. "Because whenever I make a speech which includes among other things a criticism, it always comes. And of course you know that there are people who have a loyalty that I can really only describe as blind, rather than a thinking one. It's the thinking loyalty that matters."

He then said there were others who thought as he did, to which I suggested about 30 maybe, to which he replied there were more than that, even if they didn't want to be members at the moment. "But we shall see. This is only the first week, but we're going to try. It may not work. But at any rate we can try it."

There, in brief, is the difference in attitude between Pym and Thatcher. Who can imagine her admitting, before the event, that some plan of hers might not work?

We talked a bit about hopelessness. Mr Pym believes hopelessness in a nation to be the ultimate failure of statesmanship, but he does not see that hopelessness now in the nation as a whole, only in some places like Sharncliffe and Liverpool.

I suggested this was the hopelessness which before the last war had induced Alex Douglas Home to enter politics, and Macmillan to write his *Middle Way*.

"Harold Macmillan certainly... And Winston: in foreign affairs and defence he was very much in a position against his own party. So was Anthony Eden, in matters of foreign policy. So, you know, there are some quite respectable precedents."

Reflecting that all those three had done well out of it, I asked Mr Pym if he ever hoped to hold high office again. He was sitting very far back in his armchair. "I think," he said, "that's un... There's no decision to have... Done with the matter. "No," he said, "I don't."

We chatted about the prints round his office walls that already had 500,000 of its operatives unemployed. In a smaller way it is part of the tragedy of the architectural profession that it has a foot in both camps.

Because its economics are fantastic, the politics of conservation are perpetually concerned with appeal to the emotions, to morality and to images of a better past. The leaders of the movement strive to draw the net tighter and tighter around new construction, making it more and more dependent on what is already there. Conservation is in fact an extreme form of revivalism; preventing what exists from ever being replaced at all.

In the real world of a real growth economy there could no more be an accommodation with the re-routing of roads, the salvation of country houses, or the re-use of disused barns, than there was in the years of frenzied construction that followed the Second World War.

The listing conservation boat that has no place in the real world

APART FROM thinking it is a good thing, most people do not know much about conservation and the economy. They do not know what it costs or who pays for it (although the recent *Green Paper* proposing the reduction of improvement grants (pensions for old houses) from £1.1 billion to a mere £250 million may have opened a few eyes).

In fact conservation is the mainspring of the £300 million a year heritage industry which is so used to an uncritical press that it no longer even bothers to adduce arguments to justify its defence of everything built before 1914.

When last year the government accepted three old houses and furniture in lieu of £27 million in capital transfer tax, the only complaint from the conservationists was that it should have been done sooner. For lack of dissenting voices the conversion of the built environment into a giant museum of antique show proceeds with the uniformity of religious belief. If any philistine actually dares to question the largesse of English Heritage,

This week a decision is likely to be made about the Mansion House Square scheme which has ranged Modernists against conservationists. MARTIN PAWLEY questions whether the conservationists get their sums right

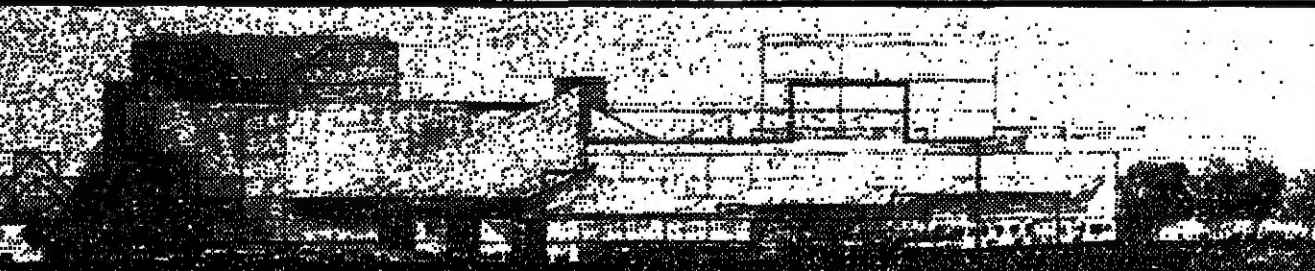
Birmingham convention centre: less financial clout than an old barn?

the Capital Transfer Tax Office, the National Heritage Memorial Fund or private organisations like the National Trust, he or she is told that all the money spent, and more, comes back in foreign exchange earned by tourism in the same year. The unasked question is whether that £5 billion, and more, is being subtracted from the potential turnover of the construction

industry — by the restrictions that conservation places on new development?

A good starting point for considering the real cost of conservation is as opposed to the construction of 500,000 houses a year, which was the preceding official ideology — is the listing of buildings. This process, which requires the chosen structure to be maintained in perpetuity in something close to what is imagined to have been its original state, is the tip of the iceberg.

At present an accelerated resurvey programme employing 30 Department of Environment staff, 15 inspectors and 11 architectural and surveying practices with 100



field workers, is busy listing 20,000 buildings a year. The total of listed buildings in England at the end of 1984 was already 338,000 and, at a calculated guess based on a multiple of their market price, their replacement value must be in the region of £35 billion.

Clearly, tourist earnings can more than keep pace with the insurance premiums on listed buildings, but equally clearly mounting repair and maintenance costs — expected to rise 50 per cent by 1988 — must steadily increase the burden on the public purse they represent. Conservation may appear to be good business at the moment, but if motor vehicles

had been maintained according to this principle for the last 40 years — instead of being continually replaced with improved models — there would be no such thing as popular motoring today.

The deeper part of the iceberg of conservation is to be found in the archipelago of local authority planning offices where all proposals to build are "vetted" by professionals imbued with a single, simple idea: that everything new should, as far as possible, look like everything old. By endorsing their local vernacular, Britain's 10,000 planners strive to create a homogeneity out of ingredients separated by

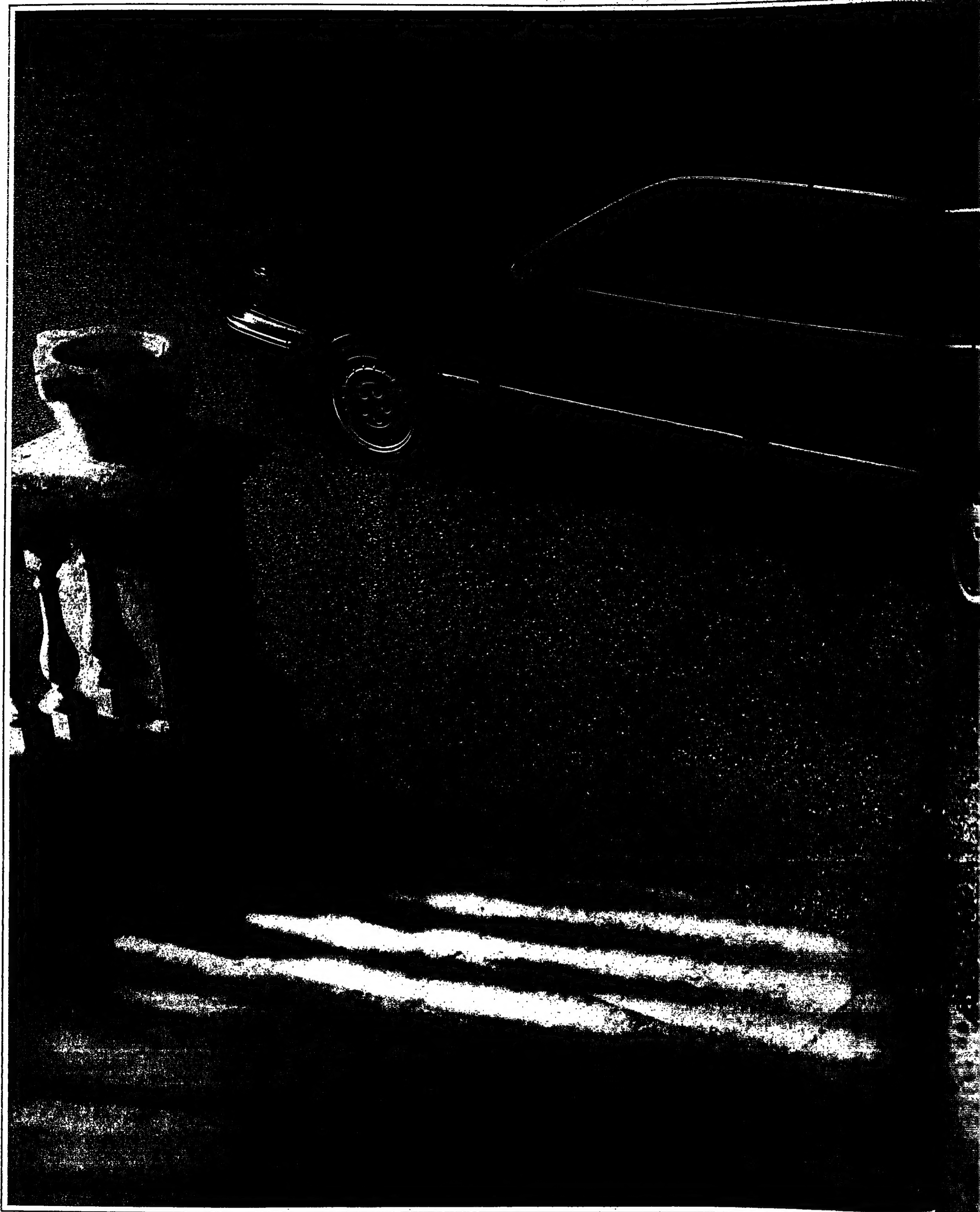
hundreds of years and dozens of uses. In rural areas the disused barn can be converted into a house after having served as a machine shed, and the passive solar house can blend in with the 400-year old cottage built without south facing windows for fear of the plague.

New development can follow an uneasy stylistic amalgam of all historical styles, the more the better. As long as it has a pitched roof it can stand happily alongside the synthetic thatched, polyurethane-painted, vinyl-clad, double glazed, concrete floored "vernacular" cottage with its fuel-injected BMW parked outside.

A memory of barely 20 years is necessary to see that the real divide in contemporary architectural thought is not between out-of-fashion modernism and fashionable post-modernism; it is between the overpowering inertia of the built environment we have inherited from the past, and the weakness of the economic force that can be brought behind such projects as the Birmingham Convention Centre, which needs £50 million in EEC grants and £25 million in council borrowing before it can even move from the shiny brochure stage.

This imbalance of forces lies at the very heart of the failure of the construction

Industry — the most labour-intensive of all heavy industries — to make any ground during recession that already has 500,000 of its operatives unemployed. In a smaller way it is part of the tragedy of the architectural profession that it has a foot in both camps.



THE NEW FORD GRAN